



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

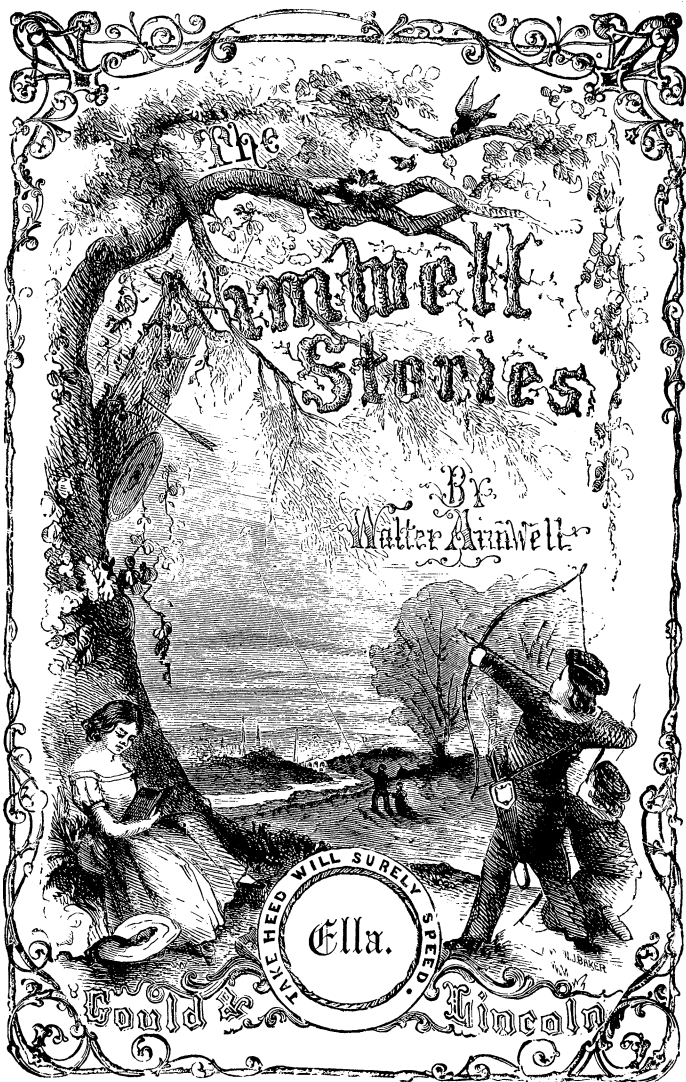
Mary A. Pattenhill.

Dec. 25th 1865

A Christmas present from Brother M.

Let this book be a always a reminder
of this sad Christmas Day.





The Aimwell Stories.

E L L A ;

OR,

TURNING OVER A NEW LEAF.

BY

WALTER AIMWELL,

AUTHOR OF "OSCAR," "CLINTON," "THE BOY'S OWN GUIDE," ETC.

With Illustrations.

BOSTON:

GOULD AND LINCOLN.

NEW YORK: SHELDON AND COMPANY.

CINCINNATI: GEO. S. BLANCHARD.

1865.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1855, by
GOULD AND LINCOLN,
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court, of the District of Massachusetts.

P R E F A C E .

IN the story of ELLA, the young reader will learn something of the universal duty of GROWING BETTER. Like the other stories of this series, it is intended for both boys and girls ; and it is affectionately commended to all children, whether good or bad ; but particularly to those who are sensible that they are not quite so exemplary in their conduct as they might be, and who are willing to consider the subject of “turning over a new leaf.”

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

THE WAYWARD BOY.

PAGE

Ella and her brothers and sisters—Her parents—A vacant seat—Oscar—His bad habits—Bad associates—Visit to Brookdale—His voyage to the West Indies—Idleness—Arrest for stealing—Bail refused—Effects of imprisonment—He is bailed out—Why he did not flee—The trial—The sentence—Sadness at home—An untimely dispute—Mrs. Preston's decision—Ella's ill conduct—George's spirit—The decision recalled—Disappointment and shame—Sad looks—Ella in her chamber—Unpleasant companions—Weeping.....	15
---	----

CHAPTER II.

MAKING RESOLUTIONS.

What Ella resolved to do—An old story—School—A boy's trick—The "squirter"—Ella's revenge—Pursuit and escape—Ralph's ducking—The complaint—Tears—Ella's mistake—Her feelings—Ralph's good-nature—Ella reproved—Her excuse—Her duty to George—Unsuccessful attempts to do better—Her confession—Want of confidence—Throwing the blame on George—Good resolutions must have no ifs—Dinner—George called to account—Ella at school—More talk about the resolution—Adopting it for a day—An incident in Mrs. Preston's life—How she conquered several bad habits—Serving God by the day—Firm decision—Prayer—Ella alone—The written resolution—Help sought from above—The drawer locked..	25
--	----

CHAPTER III.

THE TWELFTH OF JUNE.

	PAGE
Commencing in earnest—Setting the table—The new book—Mending Ralph's clothes—The reward—"Sissing"—How Ella stopped it—Good-natured revenge—Sweeping and dusting—A talk in the kitchen—Going to school—Ella's character in school—Influence of the resolution—The distinguished visitor—His address—The little girl and the Irish-woman—What a great matter a little fire kindled—A half-holiday—Aunt Fanny's letter—Her anticipated visit—Maria Long—Ella's perplexity—Her decision—Mary's gratitude—The aching tooth—An "Irish blessing"—The dentist's office—The tooth out—Ella's reward for her sacrifice—Getting wood—George's insult to the negro girl—Ralph's rebuke—Retorting—Ella's mouth shut—The resolution renewed.....	87

CHAPTER IV.

THE HOT DAY.

The resolution renewed—Encouragement—Disappointment—A sultry day—Ill-humor—Conversation overheard—Out of sorts—The musical exercise—Sitting up straight—Toeing in—Cross words—The unseen visitor—Whistler—Ella's mortification—George—A talk about nicknames—An unlucky remark—"Pop-gun" goes off—Telling mother—Ella alone—Unhappiness—George's hour of triumph—The purloined writing—Ralph's resolute order—Ella's discovery—Her distress—The reproof—The lost paper found—Its destruction—What conscience said.....	51
--	----

CHAPTER V.

THE COMPOSITION.

An arrival—Aunt Fanny—Pleasant anticipations—Aunt Fanny's accomplishments—What the children were thinking of—Ella's request—Writing compositions—An important accomplishment—

Youth the season to acquire it—Writing easily—The portfolio—Drawings—The manuscript—How long it took to write it—Advice to Ella—Her disappointment—Searching for a subject—Ill-humor—The task completed—Aunt Fanny's inquiries—The paper produced—Ella's essay on wealth—Commendation—A few criticisms—Ralph's unkind repulse—Not required to write compositions—An idea reserved for another time.....	68
---	----

CHAPTER VI.

THE PRIZE STORIES.

A promise called to mind—The picture—A startling proposition—Writing stories—The subject—A prize—An allowance made for Ralph's inexperience—The stories to be read aloud, and not examined—Ralph's inquiry—What a composition is—Difference between writing and talking—A false impression—Writing about things that interest us—A new idea—Avoid abstract subjects—Pleasant and profitable exercises—Ralph's difficulty—Why Aunt Fanny proposed a story—Imagination—Fair play—Unusual movements—Saturday afternoon—Reading of the compositions—"Little Jimmy"—The visit—In the garden—In the parlor—The beautiful books—Running off with them—The alarm and search—The runaway found—The story of "The Lost Boy"—Charley and his sister—Lonesomeness—Going to school—Lost—The search—Ponto—The little girl's lucky thought—Ponto scents Charley's track—The long walk—Crying—Charley found—Going home—Aunt Fanny's commendation—A second reading—The decision pronounced—General surprise—Ralph takes the prize—A criticism of the two stories.....	75
--	----

CHAPTER VII.

TEARS.

The unseen thorn—Ralph's kind impulse—An unexpected rebuff—A hard charge—Tears—Aunt Fanny's talk with Ralph—The secret of Ralph's success—The faults of his composition—Aunt Fanny's mistake—Evils of emulation—Ella sent for—Her confession—Her
--

aunt's reproof—Repentance—Kind words—Ella relates a chapter in her experience—Advice—Writing resolutions—Keeping the thing secret—Prayer for help—Asking forgiveness—An unpleasant duty—Her aunt's story—How she punished herself—Going to bed—Ralph's forgiveness asked—Resolutions formed.....	91
--	----

CHAPTER VIII.

A TWILIGHT TALE.

Sitting in the dark—Silent musings—The horse that ate bread—The wooden shoemaker—Ralph's story—A boy of honor—Difference in boys—A call for a story—Shall it be true or fictitious?—Location of the story—George Brown—Going to the shoemaker's—A merry time—Getting measured for a pair of boots—The shoemaker's children—Going home—A difficult path—George missed—A trick suspected—Fruitless search—What the boys thought of it—They return home—Mr. Brown's anxiety—His fears quieted—His visit to the shoemaker's—Alarm—The search—George's foot-tracks—His mysterious fate—Speculations about it—Bears—Eagles—Evil spirits—The boy who was stolen by the Indians—His return after seven years' absence—Putting the stories together—Mysteries—Ghosts—Sentiment and superstition put to flight.....	104
---	-----

CHAPTER IX.

WORK AND PLAY.

Packing trunks—The departure—The new mistress installed—Her chief mate—Ella's good conduct—Sweeping the Parlor—Dusting—The broken Cologne-bottle—An internal debate—A moment of suspense—Ella's Decision—Commendation—A few grains of censure—A private enterprise—Why it was kept secret—Forestalling an opinion—Joe Blakely—Mimicking the girls—The rag baby—The propriety of the act discussed—Practical jokes—"Tit for tat"—Delightful anticipations—Ralph's commission—The bit of glass—Ella's secret brought to light—Shame—Her excuse—A mild reproof—Going to bed—A scream—"Something in my bed"—The in-

CONTENTS.

IX
PAGE

truder brought forth—The rag baby returned—The note and token of esteem—Jokers must take as well as give—Ella's suspicions—How Joe managed to turn the laugh upon Ella—The matter dropped until Monday.....	114
---	-----

CHAPTER X.

HIGHBURG PEOPLE.

Evenings at home—Talking over the rag baby affair—Meeting Joe—Ella's excuse for talking about him—An introduction proposed—Ronald—Marcus—"The boy-tamer"—Ronald an orphan—His character—How he took his whippings—The spare-room wrongly named—A long imprisonment—How Marcus manages him—Ella's wish and complaint—Her error—A song—"Do they miss me at home?"—An unpleasant memory recalled—A tour of imagination—What the folks at Highburg are about—Ronald's imaginary relatives—Aunt Page—Rover and Netty—Ralph's song—"The Boy and Cuckoo"—Bed-time.....	180
---	-----

CHAPTER XI.

BUG BEARS.

A trial of Ella's character—Ghosts, robbers and other bugbears—Sleeping alone—Strong but ineffectual hints—A self-assumed responsibility—The regular evening colloquy—A little calculation—The probability of being visited by thieves—The chances of suffering personal violence—Dream phantoms—A suspicious noise—Stealthy footsteps—Ella's terror—A leisurely intruder—A suspicion of another kind—The mystery explained—Another startling discovery—A man under the bed—The house alarmed—George's trick—Mr. Preston's anger—Ella's mortification and resentment—Breakfast—Ralph dragged into the scrape—Danger of frightening children—The seminary girls—Making an apparition—Testing the nerves of a scholar—Alarming effects—Sufferings of their victim—Folly of being frightened by trifles—Ella's excuse—George's explanation—A bad spirit—Ralph's complaint—Peace restored.....	148
--	-----

CHAPTER XII.

U S E F U L N E S S .

PAGE

A denial—Teasing—A dishonorable discharge—Zeal cooling off—Mary's illness—Ella's offer of services—Getting breakfast—How Ella turned the egg—A good laugh—Napoleon and his omelet—Ella's resolution—A question—Aunt Fanny's reply—Unpromising tokens—Ella's dislike of house-work—Preference for fancy work—Volunteering services—Industry misdirected—Slighting work—Ella's resolution—Rules for learning to be useful—Mary's recovery—A party proposed—Arguments for and against it—The question settled—Preparations—Ella's industry—A new broom sweeps clean. 156

CHAPTER XIII.

T H E P A R T Y .

The company—How the guests were selected—Invitations—A peep at the party—Games and amusements—"Hunt the Whistle"—Joe Blakely—"The New Scholar"—Things to be written—The dialogue—The first lesson—"How do you like it?"—How it is played—Whistler's aptness at guessing—The "Greek Labyrinth"—A mazy path—"Geographical conundrums"—A few specimens—Refreshments—Breaking up—A midnight cry—Gluttony and its penalty... 163

CHAPTER XIV.

T E M P E R .

Cross and sick—An unfortunate remark—The reply—Did n't think—Ella wishes to sweep the sitting-room—George in the way—His obstinacy—Ella's good-nature—Advice sought—The room swept—George unmoved—Dusting—George's self-punishment—Elizabeth Story—Something about her character—Her inquiries—A suspicious remark—Curiosity excited—What Abby Loring said—An explosion

CONTENTS.

xi

PAGE

of anger cut short—Rankling of a barbed arrow—The matter laid before Aunt Fanny—Poor consolation—Tattling—How to treat those who are addicted to it—The hand-cart story—How it probably originated—Letting the matter drop—An attempt to conquer by kindness—Mortifying repulse—Discouragement—Return of better feelings—A reconciliation sought—Mutual discoveries and explanations—Elizabeth Story's falsehoods—Ella's frank confession—Abby's regrets and apology—Peace re-established..... 184

CHAPTER XV.

SUMMER INSECTS.

Feeding spiders with flies—Cruelty—Bad reasoning—A general complaint against certain insects—Our right to destroy troublesome creatures—No right to torture them—Arnold and Nero—How the fly walks on the ceiling—How he eats—His wings—Insect beauties—How the spider spins—Foolish dread of spiders—Affectation and prejudice—An evening chat—Annoying intruders—Where mosquitoes come from—The eggs—The larva, or wriggletails—The second transformation—The third and last—Winter quarters—Activity of mosquitoes—What they were made for—Why they poison us—The males do not bite us—Ralph's foolish speech—Aunt Fanny's reproof—A bad habit—George's nap—The dragon-fly—Its voracity—Ralph's plan—Impracticable—Going to bed..... 199

CHAPTER XVI.

THE RAINY AFTERNOON.

A storm—Value of rain—Fair weather signs—An objectionable expression—The letter—Guessing—From Oscar—Purposes of reform—Life at the Reform School—Looking forward—Messages—An encouraging letter—The rain—Aunt Fanny's story—Barney Pinchpenny—Mysteries about him—Death of Squire Topcrust—Barney's troubles—The three grim specters—A secret revealed—Golden cares—The journey—The old castle—Lodgings for the night—A

	PAGE
pretty scene—The fairies—Their gambols—Their song—A fairy guard—Their flight—The journey resumed—The secluded thicket—Nature's bed-room—A discovery—The bag of gold—Perplexing questions—Barney's compromise—The journey abandoned—Homeward bound—A second visit to the castle—Frightful dreams—Scene from the window—Army of hobgoblins—Their rage—The enemy found—Song of vengeance—Barney's struggles—The robber robbed—Home again—An unexplained mystery—The moral of the story..	214

CHAPTER XVII.

THE SILVER MEDAL.

An arrival—Uncle John and cousin Emily—Uncle John's family—Jerry's voyage—News from him—His expected return—Emily's bashfulness—Ella's disappointment—The Sabbath—Emily's dress and Ella's reflections—Bad thoughts conquered—The school exhibition—Ella's medal—The festival of medal scholars—A beautiful scene—The feast—Speeches—Presentation of bouquets—The home greeting—An addition to Ella's self-importance—A drawback—Whistler—A proposal—Clinton—City and country boys—A dispute—Work and study—Ralph's back-out.....	227
---	-----

CHAPTER XVIII.

ECONOMY.

Vacation—Disappointment—Ella's task—Staring—Self-denial—Plain sewing—Throwing a button away—Value of a button—Visit to a button-factory—The raw material—Turning buttons—Drilling the eyes—Polishing—Dyeing and assorting—Their cheapness—Wastefulness in small matters—A search—A peevish remark—Mr. Preston—His opinion of economy—Difference between economy and parsimony—Savings banks—Hoarding—A defense of it—What the dictionary says—Secrecy—Definition of economy—An objection—Safeguard against meanness—Result of the discussion—The Five Cents Savings Bank—A curious group—Ella's deposit—Funds in the bank..	250
---	-----

CHAPTER XIX.

LITTLE THINGS.

PAGE

Morning work—The missing box of paints—A provoking discovery—Temper—The smoke-snake—How it was made—The turn-spit—A mystery explained—Ella's present—Returning good for ill—Praise—Importance of little things—A source of danger—Ella's resolutions—The advantage of committing them to writing—Examples of eminent men—An encouraging sign—Effects of kindness—How George became selfish—A gradual improvement—The gunpowder plot—Half-way reforms of little value—Hopeful indications..... 262

CHAPTER XX.

THE SURPRISE.

Uncle John's preparations for going home—Suspicious movements—The letter—A plan for Oscar's benefit—General approval—Advantages anticipated—A difficulty in the way—Mr. Preston's decision—An unexplained laugh—Ella puzzled—Major Snow's story—The mystery thickens—The secret out—An unexpected journey—Promises—How George felt—Getting ready to start—A reward for good conduct—Whistler—The hack—The wharf—The departure—Farewell signals—Lonesomeness—Conclusion..... 279

Illustrations.

THE CHILDREN'S PARTY, ...	FRONTISPIECE
VIGNETTE, ...	TITLE-PAGE
THE VICTIM OF A MISTAKE, ...	28
WRITING THE RESOLUTION, ...	51
THE PRIZE PICTURE, ...	76
IN A PET, ...	100
"SOMETHING IN MY BED,"	127
THE GHOST, ...	152
THE GREEK LABYRINTH, ...	179
A SPIDER'S SPINNING APPARATUS, ...	204
BARNEY PINCHPENNY, ...	220
THE FAIRIES' JUBILEE, ...	226
THE VINE-EMBOWERED WINDOW, ...	232
THE BAG OF MONEY, ...	235
THE SMOKE-SNAKE, ...	264
THE TURN-SPIT, ...	265

ELLA PRESTON.

CHAPTER I.

THE WAYWARD BOY.

ELLA PRESTON, a few chapters in whose history I am about to relate, lived in Boston, and, at the time our story commences, was in her thirteenth year. Her proper name was Eleanor, but she was called Ella by all her acquaintances. She had several brothers, and one sister. Alice, the oldest of the children, was at this time a young lady of sixteen or seventeen years. Oscar, the oldest son, was nearly fifteen years old while Ralph and George, the younger brothers, were of the ages of eleven and nine. Mr. Preston, the father

of these children, was a shopkeeper. He was a kind, indulgent man, but was very much engrossed with his business, and left the care of the children mainly to their mother. Mrs. Preston was a devoted and affectionate mother, but there were unmistakable marks of a great sorrow in her pale and careworn face.

As the household met together from day to day, there was one vacant seat, and one missing face. The name of the absent one was seldom mentioned, but none of them could forget it. In the mother's heart, especially, it was an ever-present thought, for it was the name of her first-born son. The grave had not closed over him—alas! that it had not, she was sometimes almost tempted to exclaim, in the bitterness of her sorrow. There is a loss worse than that which it is in the power of death to inflict.

Oscar was a headstrong and wayward boy. His strong will had not been curbed and checked at home, as it needed to be; and the consequences had begun to manifest themselves. He fell into indolent habits. Then he grew disobedient, and disregardful of the wishes of his mother. His manners became rough and rude toward the other children, and he manifested

little brotherly affection for them. He began to associate with boys of a bad or doubtful character, and at length complaints of his misconduct at school, in the street, and at home, became so frequent, that his father sent him to live with his uncle John, in the village of Brookdale, in Maine. Here, though separated from evil influences, he did not make much improvement. On the other hand, he began to contaminate the boys of the village with whom he became acquainted. After awhile, he became implicated in a crime—the setting fire to a piece of woods—and his father was obliged to remove him from the State, to save him from imprisonment.

Oscar now returned to Boston, and as he expressed a strong desire to go to sea, it was thought best to yield to his wishes. A good outfit was provided for him, and he shipped for a voyage to the West Indies. He was absent from home less than two months, but he came back completely disgusted with sea-life, and not improved at all in his manners or character. He refused to make another voyage, neither would he go to school; and as no employment that suited him could be procured, he loitered about the streets, and formed

intimate acquaintance with several idle and vicious boys.

At length Oscar and several of his cronies were arrested for stealing, and were carried to jail to await their trial. Mr. Preston could have released his son from jail by giving bail for him; that is, by agreeing to pay a certain sum of money if Oscar failed to appear when his trial came on. But he was so vexed with his son's waywardness, that at first he refused to do this, and Oscar consequently laid in jail for several days. But Mr. Preston's displeasure soon melted into pity, and, yielding to his wife's earnest entreaties, he gave the required bail, and Oscar was released.

When Oscar was first arrested, he seemed quite indifferent as to the charge that was brought against him, and even denied that he knew any thing about it; although there was very clear proof of his guilt. But a few days of solitary imprisonment produced quite a change in his appearance and bearing. The bold and hardened look disappeared, and shame and anxiety betrayed themselves in his face. He listened more respectfully to the good counsels that were offered

him, and even manifested some desire to reform his ways.

When Oscar was released on bail, he might have fled from the State, had he been so disposed, and left his father to settle with the court. He solemnly promised not to do this, however, unless his friends should sanction the step; and he faithfully kept his promise. The family did think some of sending him off, and forfeiting his bonds, which were six hundred dollars. This is sometimes done by the friends of persons arrested for crime. Whether it is right, under any circumstances, to cheat the law in this way, is a question I never heard argued; but I must say such a course seems to me to involve a breach of faith toward the government under which we live.

Could six hundred dollars have absolved Oscar from his guilt in this matter, and cleared him morally as well as legally, I doubt not his father would have cheerfully paid the sum. But, after mature reflection, he decided that Oscar should take his trial. There were two considerations that guided him to this decision. One was, that if Oscar "took leg bail," as the saying is, his father would not only be obliged to pay the bonds,

but the indictment would still hang over the head of his son; who would be liable to be arrested should he ever be found within the limits of the State. The other motive was, the probability that Oscar, if found guilty, would be sent to a reformatory institution, rather than to a prison, on account of his youth.

The dreaded day of trial soon came. There sat the judge, with mild but serious face. Before him, on a less elevated seat, was the clerk, who recorded the transactions of the court. Twelve jurymen were seated in a corner by themselves; and scattered about, in various parts of the room, were lawyers, constables, witnesses, reporters and spectators. The charge was read, and the trial was commenced, and proceeded very rapidly. Mr. Preston had engaged a good lawyer to defend his son, but the evidence against him was so plain, that there could be no doubt of his guilt, and the jury brought in a verdict accordingly. The judge then sentenced him to the State Reform School, in compliance with the request of his father and his counsel.

But a few days had elapsed since Oscar's removal from his home to the institution to which he had been sentenced, and the remembrance of his sin and shame

were yet painfully fresh in the minds of all the family. No wonder that Mrs. Preston looked pale and sad, or that a general air of gloom pervaded the house.

There were two of the children, however, who did not seem to take the general misfortune so much to heart as the others did. These were Ella and George. Indeed, quite a warm dispute arose between them, but a day or two after Oscar's departure, as to which of them should occupy his seat at the table. Thinking his accustomed place a little better than their own, they both wanted it, and both attempted to take possession of it. Their mother interfered, but she found it somewhat difficult to settle the dispute. Ella claimed that she should be promoted to Oscar's seat, on the score that she was the oldest; but George insisted that he claimed the vacant seat first, and was therefore entitled to it. Mrs. Preston decided that George had the best right to the seat, and accordingly he took possession of it.

Ella did not receive this decision in a very becoming spirit. She pouted, and looked ugly and unhappy, during the whole breakfast-time. Her mother noticed her conduct with pain, but said nothing about it, until

after Mr. Preston had left the table. She was equally displeased with George's conduct; for he acted as though he enjoyed his sister's disappointment quite as much as he did his own good luck. During a moment's absence from the room, she overheard him saying, in a taunting tone,

"Ha, Miss Ella, you did n't make much that time, did you?"

"I don't care," said Ella; "I might have known mother would give you the seat, she's all the time showing partiality to you."

"George, you may sit in your old seat, hereafter," said Mrs. Preston, as she returned to the breakfast-room.

"And I may have Oscar's seat—may n't I?" inquired Ella.

"No," replied her mother, "we will let Oscar's seat remain vacant for the present. I think it may be a benefit to both of you to have something to remind you of him."

George's countenance now lengthened quite perceptibly, but Ella's did not improve in sweetness of expression. They of course concluded that their mother had

overheard the unbrotherly and unsisterly remarks that were intended only for each other's ears; but though they both felt ashamed of themselves, they were not in a mood to acknowledge it. They hurried away from the breakfast-room as soon as they could; but before Ella left, she noticed that her mother's careworn face bore a deeper shade of sadness than usual, and that moisture was gathering in her eyes—those eyes that had of late been but too familiar with tears.

Ella went up to her own chamber—a room which she occupied jointly with her sister Alice. It was a fresh and beautiful June morning, and the cheerful sun was streaming in through the open window. It still wanted an hour of school-time—an hour that she had intended to devote to a walk, in company with one or two of her young associates. But that sad look and those tearful eyes followed her to her chamber, and she could not get rid of them. She looked out of the window, but they still met her gaze in the street below and the blue sky above. She took her geography, and began to review the lesson she had committed the previous evening; but still that sad, reproachful look stared her in the face. She thought, too, of her undu-

tiful conduct, and her unkind and unjust remark; and then conscience began to accuse her of adding another bitter drop to her mother's already overflowing cup of sorrow. She threw herself upon the bed, and sobbed and wept bitterly.

CHAPTER II.

MAKING RESOLUTIONS.

WHEN Ella left her chamber, after the incidents just related, all traces of weeping had disappeared from her face. But though she appeared cheerful, she had not forgotten the scene at the breakfast-table, nor her subsequent grief. Indeed, while sobbing upon her pillow that morning, she had formed a resolution, or rather a series of them, which she meant should effect a complete reformation in her character. She had made up her mind not to add any more to her mother's unhappiness, by her bad behavior; not to allow George, or the other children, to provoke her to anger, but to treat them all kindly, whether they treated her so or not; and, in short, to "turn over a new leaf," and behave just as well as she could.

These good and wise resolutions already afforded her

much comfort and satisfaction; and most excellent resolutions they were, no doubt. I must not omit to mention one little circumstance, however, that somewhat impaired their value. Ella had formed precisely the same resolutions a score of times before, and they had amounted to just nothing!

It was now nearly eight o'clock, and Ella started for school. She did not leave her good resolutions behind her, but through the whole forenoon they were in her mind, and her conduct was quite commendable. She gave close attention to her studies, and did not whisper once, nor violate any other rule of the school. When school was dismissed, she felt very well satisfied with herself; and really she had made a good beginning.

Soon after going home, she went into the kitchen, to wash her hands. The sink was near a window, which was open. She heard the voices of Ralph and George, who were in the yard, under the window; but she did not notice what they were doing. She was wiping her hands, when suddenly a fine stream of water came through the window, and struck her in the face. At the same instant, she caught a glimpse of George's head, and she knew, from his actions, that the water

was directed purposely into her face. It was discharged from a hollow india-rubber ball, which George filled with water, and then used as a "squirter," as he called it, pressing the water out through a small hole. Without a moment's thought, Ella seized the basin of soap-suds in which she had just washed her hands, and dashed it out of the window, upon the boys.

There was a sudden explosion of anger outside, and in a moment Ralph bounded in through the door, pale with excitement, while George followed close behind, laughing at the turn affairs had taken. Ella started to leave the room, but Ralph had almost got hold of her, when Mary, the servant-girl, who had witnessed all the movements, caught him in her stout arms, and held him until Ella had made good her escape. As soon as Ralph got away, he ran up stairs to the sitting-room, where he found his mother and Ella. He was in a rather sorry plight. The soap-suds had nearly all descended upon his devoted head, wetting through his jacket and shirt-collar, and running down his neck in trickling rills; while George, for whom the sprinkling was intended, had escaped with a few drops.

"Mother, do you allow Ella—"



Ralph had proceeded thus far in his complaint, when he noticed the tears gushing from Ella's eyes, and the words died upon his lips. Every resentful feeling suddenly vanished, and when he glanced at the troubled face of his mother he felt ashamed, and would gladly have retired, without further explanation of the difficulty between him and Ella. But it was now too late to do this. Mrs. Preston drew from them an account of their

trouble, from which it appeared that Ralph was entirely innocent in the matter. He was sitting under the window with George, who had a bucket of water, and was playing with his squirter; and he did not know that Ella was near them until the basin of suds descended upon his head.

This statement did not tend in the least to relieve the feelings of Ella. Her good resolutions, but a few hours old, had not only all "gone by the board" in that sudden tempest of passion, but her revenge had fallen upon the head of the innocent. And here she was once more before her mother, planting new thorns in her sorrowful path, and doing just what she had so lately resolved not to do again.

"Never mind—there's no harm done," said Ralph, very pleasantly, when he understood the facts in the case. "I did n't know George had been squirting water at you. I thought you ducked me on purpose, or I should n't have cared any thing about it. I'll go and dry my jacket, and put on a clean collar," and away he ran, glad to get out of the unpleasant scrape so easily, though, to tell the truth, he was not at all to blame.

"I did hope that we should live in peace, now that

Oscar is gone," said Mrs. Preston; "but you and George seem determined to make me as much trouble as possible. You'll be sorry for this, before you are many years older. I feel as though you would n't have a mother to trouble a great while longer."

"It is n't my fault," said Ella, sobbing with grief. "I should behave well enough if George did n't plague me so."

"But George would soon get tired of annoying you, if you did n't get angry, and retaliate," said Mrs. Preston. "I know he is to blame, and his conduct gives me a great deal of uneasiness; but that is no excuse for you. You are the oldest, and if you would do as I want you to, you might exert a good influence over him, instead of souring his temper as you are now doing."

"I have tried to do so, ever so many times, but I can't," said Ella. "I made up my mind this morning that I would n't quarrel with him again; but I forgot all about it when he squirted the water in my face. I wish I could get over being so quick tempered, but I am afraid I never shall."

"You never will so long as you talk so, that is very certain," replied her mother. "You must firmly *believe*

that you can conquer your temper, or you will never do it."

"Well, I will tell you just what I did this morning," continued Ella. "I felt so bad because I had acted so at the table, that I went up stairs and cried almost half an hour. Then I thought the matter all over to my self, and I made a resolution that I would do every thing that you wanted me to do, and not quarrel any more with the other children. But it did no good, for just as soon as George squirted the water into my face I got angry, and forgot all about my good resolution. I am sure I meant to do better, but I am afraid it is not in me."

"No, no, do not say so," replied her mother. "You are naturally impulsive, I know, but if you really try, you can overcome this habit in a great measure, and you will find it much easier to correct the fault now, than it will be five or ten years hence."

"But I've tried, mother, over and over again, and it does no good," continued Ella, the tears beginning to flow afresh. "If George was only out of the way, I could do well enough—he is so terribly selfish, and so provoking, too, there's no living in peace with him."

"We all could be good if there were no temptation to do wrong," replied Mrs. Preston. "Instead of wishing George out of the way, how much nobler it would be for you to try to encourage him to behave better. I know he has his faults, and I am trying every means I can think of to make him correct them. And now, I want you to help me in this work, instead of standing in my way; will you do it?"

"I will, if —"

"No, Ella, there must be no ifs about it, if you mean to do any thing," interrupted Mrs. Preston. "You must make a serious business of it, and firmly resolve that you *will* do it, or I shall not consider your promises of any value at all. It is of no use to make a good resolution, and then get discouraged and give it up, the first time you break it. No, you must persevere, and make up your mind that you *will* conquer, come what may, and then you will succeed."

"Well, I'll try once more," said Ella, in a tone which indicated that she had little confidence in her ability to adhere to her purpose.

The conversation was interrupted by the dinner-bell, and the family were soon assembled around the table.

George, who had been missing since Ella's mishap, now appeared; and his mother improved the opportunity to ask him what he meant by directing his stream of water into Ella's face.

"Why," he replied, "it was only a little bit of clean water; it did n't hurt her any."

"But it was very impudent and provoking for you to do such a thing," continued his mother.

Mr. Preston now inquired what the trouble was, and the case was laid before him. After hearing all the explanations and excuses that both sides had to offer, he told George that he should take his ball away if he used it in that way again. He also advised Ella not to be in quite so great a hurry to avenge her injuries hereafter, and there the matter dropped.

It was soon time for Ella to go to school; but she kept thinking of her resolution all the afternoon, when her mind was not fully engaged with her lessons. On returning home, her mother, noticing that she appeared unusually thoughtful, remarked:

"Well, Ella, I hope you've made that resolution, and determined to stick to it."

"I don't know whether I have or not," she replied.

"I thought I had done it before, but it seems I did n't do it right."

"Then suppose you make the resolution only for one day, and try and see whether you can keep it," suggested Mrs. Preston.

"Oh, I could do that, if I tried," replied Ella.

"A good many years ago," continued her mother, "when I first became interested in the subject of religion, and began to think of joining the church, I examined myself very closely, and found that I was addicted to two or three bad habits. The two worst of these habits were peevishness and evil-speaking. One day, I said to myself, 'I must either give up all idea of being a Christian, or I must conquer these faults.' So, after thinking the matter over a while, I resolved to try and see if I could not get through one day without being guilty of either of those sins. I wrote out my resolution on paper, and signed my name to it, for I wanted to give it as much importance as possible. Then I kneeled down and asked God to help me keep it. When night came, I was delighted to find that I had not broken it once during the day, although I had been tempted several times. The next morning I adopted

it for that day, and so on for about a week, and I was so successful that I then adopted it for life. Now, I think if you would adopt some such course as this, you might conquer all your bad habits in a very short time."

Ella looked serious, but did not seem inclined to talk. After a pause, her mother added :

"I got my idea of adopting the resolution for one day only from a very pious old man who lived in our town. He used to say that all God asked of us was, to *serve him to-day*, and not to trouble ourselves about to-morrow. That is worth thinking of when we are trying to break up a bad habit. It seems much easier to do right when we only attempt it one day at a time. But, after all, we must make up our minds firmly, or we shall not succeed. And I have great faith in prayer, too. God has promised that we shall receive if we ask, and we can ask nothing that will be so pleasing to Him as to be delivered from our faults."

Mrs. Preston was now called away, and Ella was left to her own reflections. Her mother's advice, and the serious tone in which it was given, made quite an impression upon her mind. She soon went up to her

chamber, and taking her portfolio from her private drawer, sat down to the table and commenced writing. After some hesitation, she wrote the following lines upon a piece of paper :

“Being sensible of many faults in my character, which wish to correct, I hereby resolve that throughout this, the 12th day of June, I will strive with all my power to behave well. I will not do any thing to displease my mother. I will not get angry. I will treat all the family with kindness, especially George, and if he treats me ill, I will make no complaint, but try to return good for evil.

ELEANOR PRESTON.”

After reading this paper over several times, Ella sat for a few minutes, apparently lost in thought. She was thinking whether to follow her mother's advice in regard to prayer. At length her better feelings triumphed, and kneeling down, with the slip of paper in her hand, she asked God to help her keep the resolution she had adopted. She arose from her knees feeling happier than he had before felt that day.

Ella's resolution was designed for the next day, and was therefore dated one day ahead. She laid it away in her portfolio, and after locking the drawer, that no eye but her own might see the paper, she left the room.

CHAPTER III.

THE TWELFTH OF JUNE.

AFTER dressing herself, the next morning, Ella tarried in her chamber until her sister went down stairs. As soon as she was alone, she went to her portfolio, and read over several times the paper she had written the evening before. She then again asked for aid from above, that she might be kept from violating the resolution she had adopted for the day. She was in earnest now, if she never had been before, in her attempts to reform.

On going down stairs, Ella found that Mary, the Irish girl, had overslept herself, and consequently the breakfast was likely to be delayed beyond the usual time. Knowing how particular her father was to have his meals at the regular hour, she offered her services to Mary, who readily accepted them, and desired her to set

the table. She performed this service very pleasantly, and Mary soon had things in readiness for breakfast. Nothing unusual occurred at the table. After the meal was dispatched, Ella went into the sitting-room, where she found a new and very attractive book which her father had brought home the evening previous. She soon became quite interested in the illustrations scattered through the volume. While looking them over, Ralph entered the room in his shirt-sleeves, and said he was in search of his mother. She was not there, however, and he was about to seek her elsewhere, when Ella, suspecting that one of those little accidents common to boys had befallen him, inquired—

“What’s given out, now?”

“There’s a button off my wristband, and I want this hole in my pantaloons pocket mended,” replied Ralph.

“Come here, and let me see if I can’t fix them,” said Ella, laying down her book.

“That’s clever,” replied Ralph; “you fix them, and I’ll give you something nice.”

The needle and thread were soon found, and Ella proceeded to repair Ralph’s damages. While thus engaged, George entered and took possession of the book

Ella had laid down for the moment. She was about to tell him to let it alone, but she checked herself, and said nothing.

"I told you I'd give you something nice—here it is," said Ralph, when Ella had finished her job; and giving her a real boy's "smack," he darted out of the room, before she could say how she liked her reward. She did not seem to feel very badly about it, however, even if George did try to add to her discomfiture, by laughing and "sissing" at her. Indeed, she effectually silenced his battery of ridicule, by a quick and adroit movement. Suddenly throwing her arms around his neck, she imprinted two or three kisses upon his face, in spite of his kicks and struggles. For a moment George was disposed to resent this good-natured attack upon his own cheek, but a feeling of shame quickly took the place of anger, and he walked off, looking quite crest-fallen. Neither his shame nor his anger was very creditable to him, if I am any judge of such matters.

For a few moments, Ella was almost afraid that she had broken her resolution, in thus paying off George for his attempts to tease her. But a little reflection satisfied her that this was not the case, since the act was

done in sport, and not in revenge. She was soon absorbed again in the new book, from which her attention was not aroused until Alice entered, with broom and duster, prepared to "put the room to rights." Ella cheerfully assisted her in sweeping and dusting, and arranging the furniture, and then went down to the kitchen to prepare for school. She found her mother there, and George also, whose face had now lost all traces of shame, as well as anger, and seemed unusually pleasant.

"Mother," he said, as his sister entered the room, "what do you s'pose is going to happen? Ella's been kissing me; only think of it!"

"I do n't care, he provoked me to do it," replied Ella, with a laugh.

"I hope you won't provoke her to do any thing worse," said Mrs. Preston, addressing George, whose hair she was brushing. "Ella has made up her mind not to quarrel with you any more, and now I want you to try and see if you can't behave as well as she can. Only think how pleasant it will be, if you never fall out, nor have hard feelings toward each other."

George made no reply to this appeal, but being now ready for school, he seized his cap, and disappeared.

through the archway leading to the street. Ella soon followed, but the school she attended was for girls only and was in a different direction from that to which George belonged.

Ella's chief fault at school was, that she did not apply herself closely enough to her books. In other respects, her deportment was usually correct. She was not so far advanced in her studies as many other girls of her age, and she did not seem to have much ambition to learn. Under the influence of the resolution she had adopted for the day, however, she gave diligent attention to her lessons; for although the resolution did not allude to her conduct at school, somehow that little bit of paper seemed to influence her conduct wherever she went. Her recitations were all marked perfect, that forenoon.

During the forenoon, the usual routine of duties was interrupted for a short time, by a visit from a distinguished gentleman from another State, who had called to inspect the school. He was accompanied by the Mayor of the city, and a member of the school committee. He first visited several of the apartments, for the school was divided into ten or twelve divisions, each of

which had a separate room and assistant teacher. On coming in from recess, the girls were directed to take their places in the great hall, that their visitor might see them all assembled in one room. The head master then invited him to say a few words to the pupils.

“I did not design to make any remarks, my young friends,” he said, addressing the school, “but as you have taken the trouble to come together, I will not be so ungrateful as to send you back to your several rooms without thanking you and your teachers for the pleasure this visit has afforded me.” He then proceeded to compliment the school, and urged the scholars to make the most of the rare privileges they enjoyed, and especially to aim at moral excellence. In the course of his remarks, he related a fact that made quite a deep impression on the mind of Ella. Wishing to show what mischief even an unprincipled girl could do, he said the darkest page in the history of New England was probably due to the depravity of some sly and artful girls. In the year 1688, a little girl in Boston, named Goodwin, had a quarrel with an old Irish woman. Her mother sided with her, which so encouraged the wick

ed child, that she accused the old woman of being a witch. Some of the other children in the family joined in the cry, and began to mew like kittens, and bark like dogs, pretending that they were bewitched. Even good and learned men, in those times, believed in witches; and when they saw how these children acted, they concluded that the Irish woman had exerted an evil influence upon them. Four or five clergymen assembled at Mr. Goodwin's house, to see what should be done. The poor old woman tried to defend herself, but they did not understand her gibberish, and thought she confessed her guilt. She was then tried before the chief-justice, and condemned and executed. Great notoriety was given to this case, and four years afterward the famous Salem witchcraft excitement broke out, during which twenty innocent persons lost their lives. Thus, continued the gentleman, it is probable that the little girl who quarreled with the Irish woman, sowed the seed from which this dreadful delusion sprung up.

When the stranger had finished his remarks, the pupils returned to their respective rooms, and resumed their studies and recitations. It was Saturday, and when the hour for dismissal came, slates and books

were laid away in the desks, to remain undisturbed until Monday morning.

Mr. Preston brought a letter for his wife, when he came home to dinner.

"Fanny is coming," said Mrs. Preston, after reading a few lines.

"Is Aunt Fanny coming? Good! good!" exclaimed Ella; and "Good! good!" chimed in all the other children.

"Yes, she says, 'I shall be with you next week, if I can get ready—expect to leave here Thursday,'" continued Mrs. Preston, reading from the letter.

This information gave great joy to all the family, for Aunt Fanny was a favorite with the children. She was the youngest sister of Mrs. Preston, and was unmarried. Her home was in a small country village in Vermont, with a sister who was a widow. Mrs. Preston's troubles, on account of Oscar, had so worn upon her spirits and health, that she wrote to her sister Fanny, a week or two before, desiring her to come and spend a few months with her, and this letter was the reply to her invitation.

Ella intended to spend the afternoon with Maria Long,

girl of about her own age, with whom she was quite intimate. She was about starting for Maria's, who lived in the next street, when her mother called to her.

"Ella," said she, "Mary is going to the dentist's, to have a tooth pulled, and she does n't want to go alone. Can't you go with her?"

"I promised Maria I would spend the afternoon with her," replied Ella.

"Oh, well, I did n't know that," said her mother. "I can't spare the time to go out with her, and Alice is engaged, so Mary will have to go alone, for all I see."

"Besides, I can't bear to go to such places," added Ella, who seemed to feel that her first excuse needed a little propping up.

"It is n't very pleasant, I know; but if it was n't Saturday I would go, just to gratify her, for the poor girl seems to think the doctor would n't hurt her half so much if she had somebody with her."

"I don't see any sense in that. What good could I do, if I went?" inquired Ella.

"None at all—only it would be a satisfaction to Mary," replied her mother.

"Well, I will go with her, if you think I had better," said Ella, somewhat reluctantly.

"No, I shall leave you to decide the matter yourself," said Mrs. Preston. "You need not go to the dentist's, unless you want to."

It was very evident from Ella's actions how she would settle the question, if she decided according to her own feelings. There was a momentary struggle in her heart, and then she went down to the kitchen, where she found Mary, with her face bundled up, nearly ready to start.

"Mary, I'm going with you, to see that the doctor does n't hurt you," said Ella.

"Be yer goin' with me?" said Mary; "that's a cliver soul—and may ye niver need any body to go with ye to sich a place. I was afeared I'd got to go all alone, an' if the bloody old dentist had a kilt me, ye would n't be after—"

A severe and sudden twinge of pain turned the conclusion of Mary's remark into a prolonged groan. Pressing her hand against the aching spot, she pronounced an "Irish blessing" on the offending tooth, in words more forcible than nice. Hurriedly putting on her bon-

net and shawl, she was soon on the way to the dentist's, with Ella.

By the time Mary had reached the dentist's door, her pain had very much subsided, but having vowed vengeance against the disturber of her peace, she was not to be frightened from her purpose, now that it was so near accomplishment. She took her seat in the well-cushioned and high-backed operating chair. The doctor made a careful reconnoissance, to assure himself of the position and strength of the enemy. Then, selecting the proper instrument, he desired Mary to open her mouth again. A twist and a jerk, and an "Och, murder!" from Mary, and it was all over with. Ella had turned her head away, so that she did not witness the operation; but when it was over, she experienced almost as much relief as Mary herself did.

Having made this sacrifice of time and feelings for the sake of Mary, Ella spent the rest of the afternoon with Maria, and enjoyed herself none the less on account of the self-denial she had just practiced. When she returned home, at tea time, the look of approval which she read in her mother's face, more than repaid her for her loss.

"Have you got mad to-day, Ella?" inquired George, in the evening, as the children were sitting by themselves.

"No," replied Ella.

"I have n't neither ; so you see I can behave as well as you can," said George.

"Well, *I* came pretty near getting mad, when I heard you cry 'Tchu ! tchu !' at that poor little negro girl we met this morning," said Ralph, addressing George. "I would n't boast about my good behavior, if I were you, after doing such a mean thing as that."

"Oh, my !" exclaimed George ; "how smart our Ralph 's getting, because mother told him he might go over to Mrs. Johnson's and wait upon Alice home this evening ! Get up and let us see how much you 've grown."

"Any body that will hoot after a little girl, because her skin is black, I don't think much of," continued Ralph.

"Any body that will kiss the girls right before folks, *I* don't think much of," added George, alluding to the scene he had witnessed in the morning.

"I 've known that little girl for a good while—she 's

as respectable as you are," said Ralph, not noticing George's attempt to divert the conversation into another channel.

"No doubt you know her—you know all the niggers," replied George, in a provoking tone.

"Just imagine how you would like it, if you were black, and the boys hooted after you every time you went into the street," resumed Ralph.

"You'd better go and beau Alice home—that's what you're thinking of," said George.

Ella tried several times to get in a word, but in vain Ralph now left the room, and she said to George :

"I should n't have thought you'd have insulted the girl, George ; it's too bad to make fun of colored folks in that way."

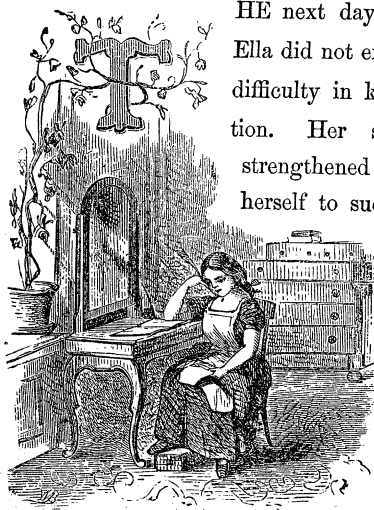
"Pooh, you'd better not say any thing," replied George, very tartly ; "who made up faces at the little Irish match-girl, the other day ?"

That was a hard question for Ella, and she wished she had said nothing about George's treatment of the colored girl. She made no reply, but seemed deeply interested in the lesson she had just commenced studying for Monday morning.

When Ella thought over the incidents of the day, after she had gone to bed, she felt pretty well satisfied with the manner in which she had kept her resolution. She had not been very strongly tempted, it was true. George had been uncommonly amiable, and nothing had occurred to ruffle her temper. Still, she had made some sacrifice, for the sake of others, and she had tried to do her duty, at home and at school. She felt so much encouraged, that she determined to continue her resolution in force another day. So ended the twelfth of **June.**

CHAPTER IV.

THE HOT DAY.



HE next day was Sunday, and Ella did not experience any great difficulty in keeping her resolution. Her success had now strengthened her confidence in herself to such a degree, that

she made up her mind to adopt the resolution for the entire week. She accordingly rewrote it, changing only the date,

and laid it away in her portfolio.

For several days Ella did not encounter any very re

markable temptation, and her behavior was on the whole quite creditable. She began to think she had won the victory, almost without striking a blow, and perhaps this feeling threw her somewhat off her guard.

"Can't I have my dinner before the others do, to-day?" inquired Ella, as she came home from school Wednesday noon.

"Why, what is your hurry?" said her mother.

"I want to start early; I'm going over to Abby Leonard's, this afternoon," replied Ella.

"Why, child!" exclaimed her mother, "you are not going to walk over to Charlestown in this hot sun?"

"You said I might go."

"So I did, but I did not expect you would go if the weather was unsuitable. Why, our thermometer is up to 95° in the shade!"

Ella hardly knew what to say to this. She had felt something of the fierce heat of the sun, in coming from school; for it was one of those sultry days that occasionally come along prematurely, in June, as if to let us know what is in store for us. She pleaded, however, that it could not be "so dreadful hot," since it was only the middle of June. Besides, she had been "lotting"

upon going, for several days, and Abby would be looking for her, and the disappointment would be very great, a'll round.

Mrs. Preston was busy, and made no reply to these pleas. Ella, finding that her mother was not disposed to consent to her visit, left the room in not very good humor. The disappointment of the previous Saturday afternoon came into her mind, and as she went up to her room, she said to herself:

"That's just the way it always is. I never make up my mind to go anywhere, but I'm sure to be cheated out of it."

"Whew! this begins to feel like summer," said Mr. Preston, as he came in to dinner, wiping the sweat from his brow.

"Father, the thermometer is up to 95° out in our yard—did you know it?" said Ralph.

"I knew the mercury was," replied Mr. Preston.

"And yet Ella is put out because mother told her she must n't walk over to Abby Leonard's this noon—almost two miles from here," said Alice.

"Fudge! the girl is crazy to think of going over there in this broiling sun," replied Mr. Preston. "Why,

just before I left the store, I heard that a man had been sun-struck on one of the wharves."

Ella was not in the sitting-room at this time, but the doors being open, she heard the conversation in her chamber, and now, in addition to her other grievances, she felt somewhat offended with Alice for mentioning the subject to her father. When she took her seat at the table, Mr. Preston alluded to the matter again, and told her she must postpone her visit to another day. Ella was unusually silent during the meal, and looked quite disappointed.

The afternoon wore away heavily, to Ella. Instead of acquiescing in the wishes of her parents, she brooded and fretted over her disappointment. Every thing seemed to go wrong with her, and every body appeared to be against her. In short, to use an expressive phrase, she was "all out of sorts." But you must not think that she had forgotten her resolution. Oh, no, she remembered it, but she did n't care one straw whether she kept it or not! In fact, she was almost provoked that she had ever adopted such a resolution!

During the afternoon, while alone in the sitting-room, Ella sat down to the pianoforte, thinking she might dis-

pel some of the unpleasant thoughts that had taken possession of her mind by a little music. She had taken music lessons from Alice, but as she was not very patient or persevering, her progress had not been at all remarkable. She was practicing an exercise, when Ralph and another boy, somewhat larger, quietly entered the room. The strange lad took a seat directly behind Ella, and his entrance was not observed by her.

"There you are again, all bent up like an old woman," said Ralph, as he seated himself by the side of the pianoforte.

"One—two—three. One—two—three," continued Ella, counting the beats of the measures she was playing, and paying no attention to Ralph.

"You'll be as round-shouldered as Daddy Murphy, by-and-by," continued Ralph.

"One—two—three. One—two—three," went the beats.

"Come, why don't you sit up straight, like other folks?" added Ralph, who seemed determined that his lesson should not be lost.

"And why don't you *toe in*, you great gawky?" sharply retorted Ella, whose patience was about exhausted,

and she pointed to Ralph's feet, which at the moment happened to be shockingly "toed in," for a well-bred boy.

"There, I've 'toed out,' now you straighten up a bit, and we shall be square," Ralph continued.

"I wish you'd clear out and mind your business—I can't count and play while you're talking to me," replied Ella, resuming her exercise.

A requish glance which Ralph cast to the other side of the room, caused Ella to turn round, and she became aware for the first time of the presence of a third person. Blushing deeply, she stammered out :

"Why, Whistler—Willie—where did you come from?"

"I happened over here, and I thought I'd come in and near you play a little," replied the boy, who felt somewhat embarrassed at having surprised Ella in such an unamiable mood.

After some coaxing, Ella was prevailed upon to resume her playing ; and while the boys are listening, let me tell you who the new-comer is. Willie Davenport—or "Whistler," as he was usually called, because he *was* a whistler, and a first-rate one, too—was a school-mate and intimate friend of Ralph. In spite of a dif-

ference of more than two years in their ages, there was such a congeniality in their tastes and dispositions, that a strong attachment had grown up between them. Ella, too, who was not remarkably partial to boys, had often, in her little disputes with Ralph about the comparative merits of boys and girls, admitted that Whistler was an exception to the general rule, and far better than the average run of young gentlemen in jackets.

Poor Ella, mortified and confused on finding that Whistler had heard her snappish replies to Ralph, made sad work with the piece she was playing, and soon came to a stand. As she seemed to be very warm, Whistler did not urge her to go on. A few minutes after, George came into the room.

"Halloo, Whistler, is that you?" he said, as he entered.

"Should n't wonder if it was," replied the boy addressed.

"Whistler—Whistler," said George, musingly, "what do you let the boys call you that for? I would n't."

"O, that does n't trouble me any," replied Whistler; "I've got so used to it that any thing else would n't

seem natural. Why, even father calls me Whistler half the time."

"Well, I would n't let the boys call me by a nickname," continued George. "But I don't like George much better. It's a common sort of a name. It is n't half as pretty as Lucius. I wish folks would call me Lucius—that's my name—George Lucius Preston."

"Fiddlestick! what's the odds whether they call you George, or Lucius, or any thing else?" said Ralph.

"No, I'll tell you what we'll call him," said Ella, with a laugh; "we'll call him Popgun, hereafter."

"Popgun" was a nickname which some roguish schoolmate had fastened upon George, several months previous to this time, and it so well fitted his hasty temper, that it had stuck to him ever since. The older boys at school used it quite freely; but it was not safe for the small fellows to follow their example, for George's bad blood was stirred every time he heard the hated nickname. It had never been applied to him at home before this, for Mrs. Preston did not allow the childrer to call each other by derisive nicknames. It was not strange, therefore, that the bare mention of this detestable word made George "go off" with one of his pop

gun explosions of anger. Giving vent to his displeasure in terms not very complimentary to his sister, he left the room. In spite of this sad exhibition of an ungoverned temper, the other children could not help laughing, to see how completely he had vindicated his claim to the nickname he so much hated. He went directly to his mother, and informed her that Ella had been calling him Popgun; for he was never backward about making all his little grievances known to his parents.

Ralph and Whistler soon went away, leaving Ella alone once more. The incidents that had just transpired, were not calculated to disperse the clouds that had darkened her mind all the afternoon. She still felt fretful and unhappy; dissatisfied with herself and with every body else. Seating herself again at the piano forte, she commenced playing her exercises.

During the afternoon, while Ralph was out in the woodshed, at work upon a ship he was building, (for the "Frog Pond" line of packets,) George—I beg his pardon, I mean Master Lucius—suddenly made his appearance, looking very much pleased about something or other.

"I've got something that will make you laugh,

Ralph,' he said ; "just look at that—won't I have something to plague El about, now ?"

Ralph read the piece of paper his brother handed to him. It was the resolution Ella had secretly adopted for that week, and which she had laid away so carefully in her portfolio. Ralph looked thoughtful, as he read it, and it was soon apparent that George's air of triumph was to find no sympathy from him.

"Where did you get this?" he at length inquired.

George at first refused to tell ; but he finally confessed that he went to Ella's drawer, in search of something, and noticing that the portfolio was unlocked, he peeped into it, when the first thing that met his eyes was this writing. He thought it too good to keep to himself, and so he had brought it down, to show to Ralph.

"Well," said Ralph, when George had finished his explanation, "you may carry it right back, and put it where you found it, and if you ever say one word about it, to any living soul, you shall take a good licking. If father won't give it to you, I will, that's all."

It was not often that Ralph spoke in so resolute a tone ; and the threat to "lick" George was something altogether new. George hardly knew what to make of

this reception of the purloined writing, so different from what he had anticipated. After a moment's hesitation he promised to return the paper, and started to do so but when he reached the entry, Ella was just going up to her room, and he was obliged to relinquish his purpose for the present.

Poor Ella! what a revelation was in store for her! She was not slow to discover that somebody had been rummaging over her drawer, for every thing was out of place. A sudden flash of heat went to her face, when her eye fell upon the portfolio, in which she had accidentally left the key. She quickly opened it, to see if the papers had been disordered; but the most private of all her private papers—the resolution—was not to be found. Again and again she searched in every pocket of the portfolio, and examined every scrap of paper, but it was not there. She was not at a loss to know who had been there. George had revenged himself upon her, for the nickname she had thoughtlessly but good naturedly applied to him; and what a revenge it was! This was the sorest trial of all. Her cup of misery was full, and she gave free vent to her tears and sobs.

Ella remained in her room until called to supper

She did not trust herself even to look at George, but avoided him in every possible way ; for she was in constant fear of hearing some allusion to her broken resolution. After tea, her mother improved a moment when no one else was near, to gently reprove her for the bad spirit she had manifested that afternoon. Ella received the reproof in silence, and soon after retired to her chamber, for she wished to be out of every body's way. On going to her drawer, she was surprised to find the missing paper laid upon the portfolio. She snatched it up, and tore it to pieces with as much satisfaction as if the innocent strip of paper was itself to blame for having strayed into other hands.

It was not yet quite dark ; but wishing to escape from the burden of her thoughts as soon as possible, Ella went to bed. Sleep, however, did not come to soothe her troubled mind for a long, weary hour. Instead thereof, there came a calm, sad voice, that whispered in her ear, over and over again, a question that she could not answer. It was only this :

“Doest thou well to be angry ? . . . Doest thou well to be angry !”

CHAPTER V.

THE COMPOSITION.

BEFORE the children got home from school, Friday afternoon, a coach stopped at Mr. Preston's door, and a lady alighted. It was Miss Lee, or Aunt Fanny, as the young folks called her. Her appearance at once imparted a more cheerful look to the whole house. The parents knew her excellent tact for managing children, and anticipated the most happy results upon the younger members of the family from her visit at this time. The children, on the other hand, looked to her even and sunny temperament to disperse the shadows that had brooded over the house ever since Oscar began to disturb its peace by his misconduct.

Aunt Fanny, at this time, was not far from thirty years old. She had spent many years in teaching, and had thus been brought into such intimate contact with

childhood and youth, that she understood every avenue to the young mind and heart. She was also skillful with her pen, and was a frequent contributor to the columns of the "Weekly Garland," a paper to which Mr. Preston was a subscriber. Besides all this, she was something of an artist, and had taught drawing and painting several terms in the Highburg Academy.

As the children dropped asleep that night, their last thoughts were of the new-comer. "Now," said Ella to herself, "I shall have somebody to help me write my compositions." Ralph was thinking of the treasures of drawings and stories that were in store for them; and George was wondering whether his aunt had brought them any presents.

"Aunt Fanny," said Ella, the next day, "I've got to write a composition to-day, and I want you to help me; you will, won't you?"

"If I can assist you in any way, I will," replied Aunt Fanny; "but do you generally have any help about your compositions?"

"Not very often," replied Ella. "Alice won't help me, and mother is too busy, and so I have to get along the best way I can. I do hate to write compositions—

it's the worst thing I have to do. I have to mope over every one I write two or three hours, and when I get done, it sounds so silly that I want to tear it up."

"How would you feel, if you were a young lady, and could not write a letter to a friend, without making yourself appear ridiculous," inquired her aunt.

"Oh, I suppose I shall know how to write, *then*," replied Ella. "It will come easy when I'm a young lady; but what's the use of making children bother their heads about such things?"

"Because childhood is the proper time to learn," said her aunt. "You will never be able to write a good letter, unless you learn how to do it; and you ought to be acquiring this knowledge now, while you have nothing to do but to learn."

"Well, it is n't natural to me, and sometimes I think I never shall learn to write properly. If I could only write as easily as you can, Aunt Fanny!"

"What makes you think I write easily?"

"Why, because you write so much—and you like to write, too."

This conversation took place in the chamber which had been set apart for Aunt Fanny's private room, dur

ing her stay in Boston. Without replying to the last remark, she went to her trunk, and brought forth a large portfolio, and commenced looking over its contents, which appeared to consist of drawings, manuscripts, letters, scraps of writing, slips from newspapers, etc.

"Oh, let me look at those pictures," said Ella, as she caught a glimpse of some of the drawings.

"Not now, Ella—we've got other business in hand, but you shall see them all, at some other time," replied her aunt.

She soon selected from the portfolio a manuscript of two or three letter-sheets.

"There," continued Aunt Fanny, "you think it is easy work for me to write—now how long do you think it took me to write that?"

Ella glanced at the caption of the piece, "The Angel of the Desert," and turned over the leaves, reading here and there a few words, and then replied :

"I suppose it took you—let me see, six pages—why I suppose it took you almost half a day to write it."

"Well," replied her aunt, "I spent nearer half a week than half a day over it, although I wrote it at odd mo-

ments. Now if I had no more patience than you have got, do you think I should ever write any thing worth printing?"

"But I thought it came natural to you to write," said Ella. "I should think you would hate it, if it is such hard work."

"It 'comes natural' to no one to write well, but all may learn, if they will take pains," replied Aunt Fanny. "What are you going to write about, this afternoon?"

"I don't know—what had I better write about?" inquired Ella.

"You had better select your own subject," said her aunt; "go into your chamber, where no one will disturb you, and select a theme, and then put down your thoughts upon it, just as if you were talking to me. When it is finished, bring it to me, and I may be able to give you some good advice about writing."

"But I thought you said you would help me," said Ella, looking disappointed.

"That is just what I am trying to do," replied her aunt. "You don't want me to write the composition, nor tell you what to write, do you? That would not

be helping you at all—it would only be cheating you teacher.”

Ella made no reply, but after a moment's delay, she left the room, with the look of disappointment still upon her face. She did suppose that her Aunt Fanny would at least tell her what to write; but she had set her adrift, upon her own resources, just as Alice had done again and again. She went to her chamber, however, and began to think about a subject. A multitude of topics readily “offered their services” to her, but it took her some time to determine which to accept. After a while, her decision was made, and her pen began its hated task. She still felt a trifle offended with her aunt for the course she had taken, and perhaps there was a slight dash of spitefulness in the perseverance with which she devoted herself to her composition. Certain it was that she wrote much faster than usual and before an hour had elapsed from the time she chose her theme, she laid down her pen, saying to herself:

“There, it's done, and no thanks to anybody.”

Ella did not carry the composition to her aunt, but went into the street as soon as it was done. After tea,

her aunt, seeing that she was not disposed to say any thing about the matter, inquired :

“ Have you written your piece, Ella ?”

“ Yes, ma’am,” replied Ella.

“ Won’t you let me see it ?” continued her aunt.

“ Oh, I don’t want you to read it—you’ll laugh at it I know you will,” said Ella.

“ No, I should’nt laugh at it, if it were full of blunders, but if you don’t want me to look at it, no matter,” mildly replied her aunt.

Ella sat a moment or two, in doubt whether to comply with the wish of her aunt or not. She then, rather reluctantly, arose, and went after the composition. She soon returned, and handed it to her aunt, without any remark. Miss Lee unfolded the paper, and read the following :

“ WEALTH.

“ How few in this world are contented ! Man is forever grasping for something ; either wealth, or fame, or honor. One man spends his whole life in hoarding up riches ; his days and his nights are all employed in laborious exertions to procure that which, when he dies, he leaves behind him. He can not be happy ; the more he

gets the more he wants. Perhaps he starts in life penniless. He eagerly looks forward to the time when he can have money enough to live easily ; he aims no higher than this. By his own exertions he obtains the desired object. But when he gets it, he is no more satisfied than before ; he sees men who, he thinks, were made for the most menial offices, rolling in their carriages ; his imagination is filled with splendid houses, and lands, and servants, and carriages ; and he makes it the whole object of his life to gain these. He engages in all manner of speculations, and at length, perhaps, becomes rich. But is he happy ? No ; he has cares now that he never had before, and which he would gladly get rid of ; he watches his property with a jealous eye ; it engrosses all his time now to take care of what he has got, till at last death steps in for a share. And now of what use is his money to him ? All he can now claim is a little spot of earth, large enough to contain his dead body. And if he have children, it is too often the case they revel in the riches which has cost him a life of hard labor, and soon spend it in profligacy, and they, in turn, are left penniless.

“ This is, generally speaking, all the satisfaction a man that pursues wealth gets. But the true Christian, the philanthropist, has higher and nobler means to live for than this. He does not confine his attention exclusively to wealth, nor honor, nor fame ; but he aims in some degree, to benefit his fellow-men. His pleasure does not consist in counting his money, but in doing good with it. He spends his time, or a part of it at

least, in visiting the sick, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, or perhaps carrying the heralds of the cross to the destitute. And when death visits him, he can look back upon his past life with some satisfaction; he knows that he has made good use of the talents which his Maker has given him. He lives like a man, and dies comparatively happy. For my part, give me neither poverty nor riches.*

“ELEANOR PRESTON.”

“Very good—very good,” said Aunt Fanny, after she had finished reading the above. “The sentiments are excellent, and they are very well expressed, too, for a girl of your age. I’m sure I do not see any reason why you should be discouraged. You can write better than I supposed you could.”

“I don’t care, I hate to write,” replied Ella.

“I told you I would help you all I could,” continued her aunt; “but I did not tell you what to write, because that would have been an injury rather than an aid to you. Now, if you will look over the composition with

* The author has taken the liberty to introduce, above, a *bona fide* “composition,” just as it came from the young writer, with the exception of two or three errors in spelling, which are corrected.

me, I will point out two or three errors; for though it is very creditable to you, it is not quite perfect. Near the close of the first paragraph, you say, 'they revel in the riches which *has* cost him a life of hard labor, and soon spend *it* in profligacy.' 'Riches,' you see, is plural, and does not agree with 'has' and 'it.' I would change it to wealth, and then it will be grammatical. A few lines farther on, you say 'the philanthropist has higher and nobler *means* to live for;' you meant to say aims, did you not?"

"Yes, that is what I meant; why, how could I make such a mistake? I knew better than that," replied Ella.

"There is only one more expression that I shall criticise," continued her aunt. "A little further on, you speak of 'carrying the heralds of the cross to the destitute.' By 'heralds of the cross,' we usually mean preachers, or religious teachers; but I suppose 'carrying the *Gospel*,' was the idea you intended to convey. Now, if you please, you may make these three corrections, and if you will take a little more time, and don't get discouraged, I think you will soon make a good writer."

"Halloo, let's see that," exclaimed Ralph, who had just entered the room, and caught a glimpse of the composition.

"No, you won't see it, either," cried Ella, in not a very gentle tone, at the same time impolitely snatching the paper from her aunt, and thrusting it into her pocket.

Miss Lee looked a little surprised, and in half a moment Ella felt ashamed of herself; but her aunt, in the same mild tone, inquired:

"Do you write compositions, Ralph?"

"No, ma'am, I don't now," he replied, "but after this term is over, I'm going to be promoted to the second class, and then I shall have to write compositions, and speak pieces, too."

"I was just telling Ella," continued his aunt, "that if she would take a little pains, she might learn to write very well in a short time. But she says she doesn't like to compose, and that is often the case with young folks. I think I know why writing is so irksome to school children, and I've got an idea that I want to propose to both of you; but as I must go down to the kitchen now, I will put it off until some other time."

"Shan't you come back soon?" inquired Ralph, whose curiosity was excited.

"No, not very soon," replied his aunt, "and as it's Saturday night, we had better postpone the matter till next week."

CHAPTER VI.

THE PRIZE STORIES.

ON coming home from school, Monday afternoon, Ella and Ralph found their aunt sitting alone in her chamber, and they improved the opportunity to remind her of the promise she made to them on Saturday evening.

"Well," she replied, "I'm glad you remembered it, and I'll talk with you about the matter now, if you wish. I think I can convince you that writing compositions need not be an uninteresting exercise. But first, I want to show you a picture."

Aunt Fanny now took from her portfolio a picture, painted in water-colors on thick paper. It represented a boy of four or five years, in the open air, with several

books under his arms, a wreath of green leaves around his head, and two other wreaths in his hand. Here is a copy of the picture :



"There," said Aunt Fanny, "I want you both to see if you can't write a little story about this picture."

"Me write a story !" exclaimed Ralph, with a laugh, "why, I never wrote a composition in my life."

"And you never will, until you try," replied his aunt. "But you will soon have to begin to write, and if you practice a little now, it will come easier to you when you get into the next class."

"But what does this picture mean?" inquired Ella; "who is that boy? and where is he going? and where did such a little fellow get all those books?"

"You must n't either of you ask any questions about the picture," replied her aunt, "for that would spoil the whole. I want you to exercise your own imaginations, and make up a little story about the painting that shall be all your own. You may call the child what you please, and you must explain how he got the books and wreaths, and what he is going to do with them. You may have all the week to do it in. Next Saturday afternoon, I will examine the stories, and the one that has done best, shall have the picture for his reward. Do you agree to that?"

"I do," replied Ella.

"I'll try," said Ralph, somewhat reluctantly; "but it is n't of much use, for Ella's been writing compositions a year or two, and I never wrote one in my life."

"I know the advantage is on her side," replied his aunt, "but perhaps we can remedy that. I suppose if your composition was not quite equal to hers, the defects would be mainly in the punctuation, wrong use of capitals, and perhaps bad spelling, and similar errors

Now these are very important matters to consider, in passing judgment upon a composition ; but if Ella consents, I will not take these into account, in this instance. In that case, you will both be on a more equal footing."

"I'll agree to that," said Ella.

"What do you say, Ralph?" inquired his aunt.

"I'll write something or other, but I know I shan't get the prize," he replied.

"I hope you will both do your best," said their aunt, "and I will try to give an impartial decision. When the stories are finished, you may choose some one to read them to me, and then I shan't know any thing about those little errors that we agreed to leave out of the account. You must not let me know which is Ella's and which is Ralph's until after the decision. You see I mean to be as impartial as possible."

"That's fair enough," said Ella. "Ralph, you must n't ask me any thing about my story, and I won't ask you about yours."

Ralph assented to this; but he still seemed to be somewhat puzzled about the whole affair. At length he ventured to ask,

"Do you think we can learn to write compositions by making up stories, Aunt Fanny?"

"What do you mean by compositions?"

"Why, I mean some writing about a particular subject; is n't that the meaning?"

"I guess you have n't a very clear idea of the meaning of the word," replied his aunt. "Writing composition is nothing more than *talking on paper*. Writing and talking amount to the same thing, only in one case we use the pen, and in the other the tongue. It makes no difference whether you write a story, or a description, or an essay—one is just as much a composition as another. You gave me quite an interesting account of your young friend Whistler, who was here Saturday afternoon. You told how brave and generous he is, and you related two or three anecdotes about him. Now, if you should write down what you told me, precisely as you spoke it, that would be a composition, and a very good one, too."

"I never thought of that before," said Ralph; "I always supposed a composition had to be a sober kind of a thing, something like a book or a sermon, only not so long."

"That is a common mistake," replied his aunt, "and it is this false impression that makes writing compositions so hateful to young folks. You don't find many boys or girls that hate to talk, do you? But if they were always compelled to 'talk like a book' about subjects that were above their comprehension, do you think their tongues would go as fast as they now do? No, they talk about things that interest them, and if they would write about the same things, just as they converse about them, writing would soon become almost as easy as talking, and they would derive a great benefit from the exercise. They would learn to express their thoughts upon paper, and that is the great object of writing compositions."

Both Ella and Ralph confessed that this was a new view of the subject; and perceiving their interest in the matter, their aunt proceeded to give them some further instruction. She advised them to begin with subjects that do not require too much reflection. There are ideas which are called *abstract*—that is, they exist only in the mind—such as virtue, glory, hope, fear, etc. Instead of selecting themes of this sort, they would do better, at first, to describe places, things or persons that

they have actually seen ; or to write down what they can remember of lectures or remarks they have heard, or books they have read. She also recommended writing letters, and keeping journals, as profitable exercises. But she told them they must always express their ideas in a familiar and natural way, just as they would speak them. They must not try to imitate books, or to make a display of long sentences and hard words. In this way, she added, they would, in a little while, acquire a habit of writing ; and then, when they were a little older, and their minds more mature, they would be prepared to take up abstract subjects, which are now so disagreeable to them.

“There’s one thing I don’t understand,” said Ralph. “You said we must begin by writing about things we have seen or heard ; but how can we do that, if we make up a story about this picture ?”

“Why, you see the picture, don’t you ?” inquired Ella.

“Yes, but I don’t see the *story*, do you ?” replied Ralph.

Ella’s mind was not quite clear on this point, for she had not followed her aunt’s remarks so closely as

Ralph had. But Miss Lee explained the matter by saying—

“Ralph is right. If he followed the rule I gave him, he would merely write a description of the picture, and not a story about it. But in this case I wish you to deviate from that rule, and I will tell you why. To write such a composition as I have proposed, you will not need to exercise much reason or judgment, but simply *imagination*. Now this faculty is developed in early childhood, and I suppose both of you have plenty of it. When I told you to avoid all abstract themes, I should have made an exception in favor of this class of subjects, which depend upon the fancy, and do not require much thought. In writing compositions, you should rely mainly upon such faculties as you have, and not make much use of those that are not yet developed. That is all my rule amounts to.”

“But I don’t believe I’ve got much imagination,” said Ralph.

“I *know* I have n’t,” added Ella.

“Then you are remarkable children,” said their aunt; “but I’m inclined to think you are both mistaken. I’ve tried this thing with children before, and

I know how it works. You go ahead with your stories, and do your best, and we shall soon see whether you have got any fancy or not."

"We must write it all out of our own heads, and not let any body tell us what to say," observed Ella, looking rather hardly at Ralph, as though she suspected that he might be tempted to avail himself of somebody's pen besides his own.

"Of course," replied her brother; "I go for fair play, whoever gets the prize."

The conversation here ended, and the children retired from their aunt's chamber, and were soon as completely engrossed in their outdoor sports, as if their great literary undertaking had never been thought of.

An attentive observer might have noticed that there was something unusual on the carpet, that week, in Mr. Preston's house. The great dictionary came down from its shelf in the sitting-room so frequently, that the dust had no chance to settle upon it; and if the dignified quarto had any private ideas of its own, it must have imagined that it had all at once become very popular or useful. Ralph and Ella spent many of their leisure moments alone, in their own chambers; but

nobody knew what they were about, except Aunt Fanny, and she kept her counsels to herself. So the week wore away.

After dinner, on Saturday, Miss Lee told Ella and Ralph that she was ready to award the prize. After a little consultation, they concluded to ask their sister Alice to read the compositions; and she having accepted the trust, they all proceeded to their aunt's chamber. The two young competitors were disposed to make themselves merry, over their novel position; but order was soon restored, and Alice opened one of the folded papers that had been handed to her, and read the following:

"LITTLE JIMMY.*

"Little Jimmy was a pretty boy. He had a round, fat face, and white skin, and fine brown hair, that curled. He lived in the country, and was not old enough to go to school. I should think he was about five years old. One day, in the summer, his father carried him to ride, to see a gentleman who had a splendid house and garden, filled with all kinds of rare and beautiful things. While his father was talking with

*The reference figures in this and the succeeding story, point out inaccuracies of expression, which are corrected in the note at the end of the chapter.

the gentleman, little Jimmy ran round in the beautiful garden, and played with the flowers. But he was often a mischievous boy, though I suppose he was not old enough to know better. He pulled off some of the handsomest flowers he could find, and tore them to pieces, to see what there was in them. He also broke off some long twigs from a shrub that the gentleman prized very high,² and ruined it. He made a sort of wreath³ of these, and put one of them on his head, having left his cap in the house, and nobody noticed what he was about.

"After Jimmy got tired playing⁴ in the garden, he went back to the house. He did not see his father, nor any body else; but he went into the parlor, the door of which was open. It was elegantly furnished, and there were a great many beautiful books, covered with gold, and full of pictures, laying⁵ on the centre-table. He could only reach⁶ those on the edges,⁷ and he pulled down several of them, and was delighted with the beautiful pictures.

" 'O, how I do wish these were mine!' he said.

"When he had got five or six of the books in his possession, he formed the idea of carrying them home with him; and as nobody saw him, he accordingly marched off with them under his arms. By-and-by his father missed him, and the whole family begun⁸ to hunt for him, in great alarm. They went all over the extensive grounds, but Jimmy was not to be found. What made it more singular was, that his cap was still in the entry. They called him, but he did not answer. His

father was now very much alarmed ; but soon they spied the gardener leading the little runaway down the road that led to the house. It seems he saw the boy, after he had gone some ways,¹⁰ and he started after him before his father missed him.¹¹ When they asked him what he went off for, he said he was going home, to show the pretty books to his mother. His father laughed and told him it was five miles to his home, but Jimmy did not know how far that was. They were all rejoiced that his adventure had ended no worse."

"That is quite natural, and very well done," said Aunt Fanny ; "now let us hear the other."

Alice then read the other composition, as follows :

"THE LOST BOY.

"Charley Gray was a little boy who lived in the country. He had a sister several years older, and was very fond of her. His sister went to school, and at such times¹ he was often very lonesome, having nobody to play with. One morning, before his sister started for school, she twisted some leaves into wreaths, and gave them to him. He put one on his head, and felt quite proud of it. But after his sister was gone, he began to feel lonesome, as usual. At length he took it into his head that he would go to school and see if² he could find her. So he got all the books he could reach, for he thought it would not do to go to school without something to read and study out of.³ His mother was

busy, and did not notice what he was about ; so off he started toward the school-house.

"But Charley did not know the way to the school, although he thought he did. In a little while he got out of the road, and turned into a field, as you see him in the picture. But he kept on, and did not stop to think where he was going to,⁴ for he had no doubt that he was on the way to school.

"By-and-by Charley's mother missed him. She hunted over the house, but he was not there. She looked in the barn and garden,⁵ but he was not to be found. She even looked down the well, for she thought he might possibly have fell down⁶ into it, but there was⁷ no signs of him there. While she was searching and calling for him, his sister came home from school, and she felt very bad when she found⁸ her little brother was gone.

"'Mother,' she said, 'I will go and call father, who is to⁹ work down in the field,' and away she ran after her father.¹⁰

"Pretty soon Mr. Gray arrived, and he, too, was much frightened. His dog came with him. He was a handsome black fellow, and very intelligent, and they had learnt¹¹ him many tricks. All of a sudden¹² a bright idea occurred to the little girl.

"'Ponto,' she said, for that was the dog's name, 'go and show me where Charley went.'

"The sagacious animal looked up into the faces of the family, and capered about as though he meant to say that he knew what was wanted. Then he began to

smell the ground, and pretty soon he found the right track, and wagged his bushy tail with joy. The little girl followed him, and he kept looking round to see if she was coming. Sometimes, when he got too far ahead of her, he stopped till she got up with him.

"It was a very long and crooked path they took, and the girl was beginning to be afraid she should not find her brother after all, when all at once she thought she heard a child crying. She listened, and then hurried on faster than ever, for the dog was most¹³ out of sight. A loud bark from Ponto soon informed her that he had found something, and in a moment more she reached the spot, and, sure enough, there was little Charley lying down on the grass, crying as though his heart would break. As soon as he saw his sister and Ponto, he began to leave off crying, but he could not stop crying and sobbing¹⁴ all at once. His wreaths had all come to pieces, and the books were all scattered about him. He was very tired and hungry, but he was glad enough to see them.¹⁵ His sister took him up in her arms and started for home. She had a hard time of it, to carry¹⁶ him and the books; but by stopping to rest once in a while, she got home with him at last; and I can assure you there was great joy in that house when the lost boy was found."

"That is very well done, too," said Aunt Fanny, "you have both succeeded better than I expected. I shall be puzzled a little to say which of the composi-

tions is best. Will you be good enough to read them aloud once more, Alice?"

Alice complied with this request. When she had finished, Aunt Fanny sat thinking a moment, and then said—

"Well, really, both compositions are deserving of the prize; but I think the story of little Charley is rather better than the other. It has more fancy and incident than the story of Jimmy; the introduction of Ponto is quite a good idea; and besides, the character of Charley is rather more agreeable than that of the mischievous Jimmy. As far as the mere composition is concerned, one sounds about as well as the other; but, taking all things into the account, I think I ought to award the prize to the author of 'The Lost Boy.' Which of you wrote it?"

"I did," promptly responded Ralph, his eyes sparkling with joy.

Something in the face of Ella had informed Aunt Fanny who the successful competitor was, before she asked this question. She was herself surprised at the result, as much as Ella was. But Ralph seemed more astonished than either of them. With a flushed face,

and beaming eye, and proud step, he came forward and received from his aunt the picture he had won.

NOTE.—As it did not enter into Aunt Fanny's plan to *criticise* the compositions for the prize, and as I hope the readers of this book are in pursuit of instruction not less than amusement, I will here point out the most important inaccuracies and inelegancies in the stories of Ella and Ralph. The figures below refer to corresponding ones in the stories.

"LITTLE JIMMY."—1. This and similar adjectives occur too often throughout the story.—2. Change "high" to *highly*.—3. Change "a sort of wreath" to *several wreaths*.—4. Should read "tired of playing."—5. "Laying" should be *lying*.—6. "Only reach" should be *reach only*.—7. Change "on the edges," to *on the edge of the table*.—8. Change "begun" to *began*.—9. This sentence is quite awkward, and should be erased entirely, or reconstructed.—10. Change "some ways" to *some distance*.—11. There is confusion in this and the next sentence, from the careless use of the words "he," "him," and "his," which might refer to the gardener, to Jimmy, or to his father.

"THE LOST BOX."—1. Omit "at such times."—2. Change "if" to *whether*.—3. As a general rule, sentences should not end with "of." In this case it is decidedly bad.—4. Omit "to."—5. Insert *the* before "garden."—6. "Fell" should be *fallen*, and "down" should be omitted.—7. Change "was" to *were*.—8. Insert *that* after "found."—9. Change "to work" to *at work*.—10. To avoid the repetition, change "her father" to *him*.—11. Change "learnt" to *taught*.—12. For "all of a sudden," read *suddenly*.—13. Change "most" to *almost*.—14. Omit "crying and sobbing."—15. "Them" is too far from the nouns it belongs to.—16. Instead of "to carry," read *carrying*.

CHAPTER VII.

TEARS.

THE hand that is put forth to grasp a prize, is too often wounded by an unseen thorn, which only pierces the more cruelly, because it was unexpected. As soon as Ralph's first flush of triumph was over, he began to think of the disappointment of his sister, which her face had betrayed perhaps more faithfully than she wished. This was a serious drawback to the pleasure afforded by his success. But there was a sharper thorn yet to come.

Ralph, in the kindness of his heart, resolved at once to present the picture he had won to Ella, hoping thus to relieve her disappointment in a measure. After hunting for her, all over the house, he at last found her in an attic room that was seldom visited by any of the family. In her chagrin and vexation, after her

aunt had pronounced in favor of Ralph's composition, she had retreated to this out-of-the-way place, where she thought she could indulge in her ugly and unhappy feelings, without being disturbed. Ralph's intrusion was not calculated to allay the stormy passions that were stirred within her. He told her, in kind tones, that he had come to give the picture to her; but she not only rudely refused the gift, but actually accused him of having won the prize by *fraud*! She did not use this hard word, it is true; but what she did say, amounted to this, for she declared that she did not believe Ralph ever wrote the composition he claimed as his, without assistance. As she brought this serious accusation against her brother, her overcharged heart found vent in a torrent of tears, and Ralph withdrew.

Poor Ralph was stung to the soul by Ella's hasty charge, coming, as it did, at a moment when he was trying to show her kindness. He went immediately to his aunt, and, handing her the prize he had received but an hour before, said,

"Here, Aunt Fanny, I can't keep this, for Ella says she doesn't believe I wrote my composition myself;" and as he surrendered the picture, he burst into tears.

"But what does this mean?" inquired his aunt; "did n't you write your composition?"

"Yes, ma'am, every word of it, and nobody told me o' a single thing that I wrote," replied Ralph.

"So I supposed," said his aunt; "and I am very sorry Ella should make such a remark. But I do not believe she meant what she said, and if I were you, I would not think any thing of it. I will talk with her about it, the first chance I get, and the matter shall be all cleared up to your satisfaction. We must make some allowance for Ella—she is quick-tempered, but she soon gets over it. No doubt she feels a little provoked, because you beat her in writing compositions, but it won't last long. I was surprised, myself, that you should carry off the palm."

"I did n't expect it," said Ralph; "but I worked a good deal harder than Ella did. I wrote my story all over four times, and most of hers she did n't write but once."

"That accounts for it, then," replied his aunt; "Ella thought she was sure of the prize, and so she did n't try very hard. Well, it will be a lesson to her, I hope."

It should be remarked, that although Ralph's story was adjudged the best, it was far less perfect, as a piece of writing, than Ella's, the manuscript of course bearing numerous marks of his inexperience. Ella would easily have taken the prize, had it not been agreed that the pieces should not be examined, but merely read aloud. As it was, she probably might have won it, but for her unwise confidence in herself, which kept her from putting forth her strongest exertions.

In the course of the afternoon, Aunt Fanny informed Mrs. Preston of the state of affairs, and this led to a long conversation about Ella, particularly with reference to her disposition. Aunt Fanny confessed that she had made a mistake in exciting the emulation of Ralph and Ella. She said she had nearly lost her faith in offering prizes to children, by what she had often witnessed in school. If all children were generous and noble-minded, there would be little trouble ; but there were some who could not see another receive the prize they had themselves expected, without having selfish, envious, and unkind feelings stirred within them. She did not anticipate any thing of this kind, from either Ella or

Ralph ; but the result showed that she had been mistaken in the character of at least one of the children.

Ella kept aloof from the family as much as possible, the rest of the day. In the evening, however, Miss Lee sent word to her that she wished to see her, and she did not dare to refuse the interview. She went to her aunt's chamber, and found her alone.

"Ella," said Aunt Fanny, "I'm very sorry to hear that you accused Ralph of getting somebody to help him write his composition. Do you really believe that he would cheat you and me in that way?"

Ella hesitated a moment ; then, burying her face in her hands, her tears began to flow afresh, and she sobbed,

"Don't say any thing more about it, aunt—I didn't mean it—I was angry when I said it."

"You have done well to confess it so frankly, and I shall think all the better of you for it," replied her aunt. "But you did very wrong, and I think something more ought to be said to you about it. You don't know how badly poor Ralph felt. He came to me, and wanted me to take back the picture, and cried harder than I ever knew him to cry before. It made me feel badly, too,

for I felt as though I were the cause of all the trouble. I am sure I was innocent enough, in what I did. I supposed you would both enjoy the excitement of writing for the prize, and perhaps be benefited by it; and I never once thought that either of you could be so much disappointed as to get angry about such a trifle."

These words of reproof, though mildly spoken, fell upon Ella's heart like stripes upon the shrinking flesh. Before her aunt sent for her, her passion had cooled off, and she felt both sorrow and shame for the unamiable part she had acted. These feelings were now greatly deepened, as her aunt set her conduct before her in its true light. She made no reply, but wept freely.

Aunt Fanny, who was engaged in sewing, sat for a time in silence. At length, when Ella's feelings began to grow calmer, she resumed the conversation, kindly pointing out to her niece the evil she had done to herself and to others by the bad spirit she had manifested. She spoke of the danger that these disagreeable faults in her disposition would work themselves into the very texture of her character, so that it would be next to

impossible to eradicate them, unless they were conquered soon. She described such a temper, as it would appear when full-grown, in womanhood. She also spoke of the trouble the family had suffered, on Oscar's account, and of the obligation the other children were under to smooth their parents' path, as much as possible, by their own good conduct. And finally, she told Ella that she would be far happier, herself, if she would conquer these faults.

Ella,—who after all was a good-hearted girl, though often led astray by bad impulses,—listened respectfully to all that her aunt had to say. She then frankly laid open her heart to her kind friend. She spoke of her desire to conquer these bad habits; of the resolutions and efforts she had made, but two weeks before; and of the discouragements and failure she had experienced. Miss Lee was both surprised and gratified to learn that Ella had actually made so serious an attempt at reformation. She now felt a new interest in her, and a tenderer affection for her; for we can not help sympathizing with those who are struggling to throw off a bad habit. When Ella had concluded her confession, she said—

“My dear child, I am very glad you have told me of this. I shall love you better for it, and I shall feel encouraged to try to help you fight the enemy. I think you chose an excellent way to conquer your temper, and the only mistake was, in not sticking to it. You ought not to have been driven from your resolution, the first time you met with a difficulty. No matter if you do slip once, or twice, or a dozen times; you should jump up again, and run as though nothing had happened. Now I want you to write out and adopt another resolution, like the one you made the other day, and try to keep it next week. It is too late to do it, to-night, but to-morrow is Sunday, and you will then have time enough to attend to it—and it will be a very suitable employment for the day, too. I think you will find it easier to keep the resolution, this time, because I know you have adopted it. If you had not kept the matter so secret, before, but had informed your mother of your intention, I think you would have succeeded better, because you would have had a new inducement to persevere. You will let me tell your mother about this resolution, will you not?”

Ella had not yet promised to adopt the resolution at

all; but she could not reject the counsel of her aunt, and so she not only agreed to make the attempt, but consented that her mother should be made acquainted with her efforts at self-improvement.

"There is one other Being that ought to be informed of your resolution," continued Aunt Fanny, "and I hope you will not forget Him. Such a resolution as that, ought to be formed in a prayerful spirit; for I do really believe that prayer not only makes us more earnest in our efforts, but also brings us assistance from above."

It was getting late, and Ella's hour for retiring had arrived; but she did not seem inclined to leave her aunt. After sitting silently for a few moments, the cause of her reluctance to retire was explained, by her inquiring:

"What shall I say to Ralph?"

"I would ask his forgiveness, by all means," replied her aunt. "He feels badly about what you said, but that will satisfy him, I have no doubt."

"But I hate to do that," replied Ella.

"I know it is not a very pleasant duty," added her aunt, "but still I would do it. I think you and he will both feel better for it."

"But I never asked any body's forgiveness, in my life," said Ella; "I never *could* do it."

"Then it is time you began to practice," replied her aunt, "for it is a thing the best of us have occasion to do, sometimes. I remember well the first time I asked any body's forgiveness—and a hard struggle it was, too



I was a little girl, smaller than you are, now. I had spoken very impudently to my grandfather, who lived with us, and my mother told me I must ask his pardon. I refused to do it, and cried about it, but my mother would not let me off. I wanted to go out to play, but she told me I must not leave the house until I had com-

plied with her command. I turned my back to her and pouted, and cried, and made myself as wretched as I could. Though mother was very firm, she spoke kindly; but I was obstinate and foolish enough to punish myself in this way half the afternoon; and then, after all, I had to go to grandpa and ask his pardon. When it was over with, I could not help thinking what a fool I had been; for it was not half so hard to offer my apology as I supposed it would be. Since then, I have never found it very difficult to ask pardon of those I have injured."

Ella promised that she would ask Ralph's pardon and then retired for the night, feeling that quite a burden had been removed from her mind, during the hour she had spent with her aunt.

Ella kept her promise, the next morning, although it required something of a struggle to do so. Improving a moment when Ralph and she were alone, she said,

"I did n't mean what I said yesterday, Ralph, and I'm sorry for it; will you forgive me?"

"Yes," replied Ralph, who was so confused by this unusual and unexpected style of remark, that he could not think of any thing more to say.

Ella now began to feel like herself once more. She thought much of what her aunt had said to her, the evening previous, and she resolved that she would try to profit by it. She followed her aunt's advice, in regard to writing out the resolution, but was careful, this time, not to leave the paper where George might find it.

CHAPTER VIII.

A TWILIGHT TALE.

WHO'S here? I can't tell one of you from another," exclaimed Ralph, as he came into the sitting room from his play, one evening, a few days after the events just related.

"We are all here, except your father," replied Mrs. Preston; for they were sitting in the dark, hence Ralph's question.

"What a sociable time you are having!" he added, after waiting a few moments for some one to break the silence.

"We are thinking over the events of the day," replied his aunt; "at least, I am, for I can't speak for the others. What have *you* seen to-day that was remarkable—any thing?"

"I saw something queer, this morning," said George,

before Ralph could reply to his aunt's question. "As I was going along Court-street, I saw a baker's horse eat a loaf of bread. The baker took a small roll from his cart, and broke it in two, and gave the horse half of it at a time, and he ate it right down."

"What of that?" said Ralph; "is n't bread made of grain—and don't horses eat grain, when they can get it?"

"I know it, but it seemed funny to see a horse eat bread—I never saw one do it before," replied George.

"I saw something to-day that beat that," said Ella. "I went with Maria Long to the store where her brother keeps, and he showed to us a little wooden shoemaker, that went through all the motions of sewing a shoe, just like a live man. He drew the waxed threads out just as natural as life; and he bent his head up and down, and opened his mouth, just as though he was working as hard as he could. He was in a box with a glass front, and behind there was a spring and some machinery, that made him move. It had to be wound up, just like a clock."

"Now I'll tell you of something that I saw," said Ralph; "and I guess you'll all agree that it was the

best sight of the whole. When the first class in geography was reciting, this morning, the next boy above Whistler missed a question, and it was put to Whistler. He was just going to give it up, too, when another boy prompted him, and so he gave the answer. The master told him to go up above the other boy; but Whistler hung back, and at last the master questioned him so hard, that he said he had been prompted, and he did n't think he ought to be promoted."

"That *was* a good sight, and Whistler is a noble fellow," said Aunt Fanny.

"The master said he was afraid there were not many boys who were so honorable," added Ralph.

"It is strange that there should be such a difference in boys; it seems as natural to some to behave well, as it is to others to do wrong," remarked Mrs. Preston, whose thoughts, during that season of twilight musing, were with her absent and erring boy.

"Come, Aunt Fanny, let's have a story now," said Ralph. "You promised us one last week, and it's real good time for it, now."

The other children promptly seconded Ralph's request.

"Well," said their aunt, "I'll see if I can think of any thing. What do you want, a true story, or an imaginary one?"

"A true one," said Ralph.

"An imaginary one," said Ella. "I'll tell you what, aunt; you make up a story, and let us all be introduced into it as characters."

"If I give you a fictitious story," replied her aunt, "it must be one that I have already in my head, for I should not like to try to make it up as I went along."

It was finally concluded that the story should be a narrative of events that had actually occurred. Aunt Fanny then proceeded:—

"The story I am going to relate, was told to me by a lady from Canada, who now lives in Highburg, and is one of our nearest neighbors. The events took place in a new settlement in the woods, where she formerly lived for several years. There were but few settlers in that part of Canada, at the time, and there were immense forests on every hand. Among the settlers was an English family, by the name of Brown. My story relates to one of the sons of this family, who was about twelve years old and was named George. One day in

the fall, just as winter was setting in, Mr. Brown told George that he might go over to the shoemaker's, with two other boys of about his age, and get measured for a stout pair of boots. The man who made shoes for the settlement united that business with farming. He lived, I think, about three miles from Mr. Brown's.

"The three boys started off upon their errand in fine spirits ; for there had just been a slight fall of snow—the first of the season—and you know how happy boys are when the first batch of snow comes. The day was pleasant and frosty, and they ran races, and slid over the ice, and leaped over the fallen logs, and pelted one another with snow-balls, all the way. At length they reached the shoemaker's cabin—for all the people in the neighborhood lived in log-cabins, as they had no facilities for building frame houses. The shoemaker took the measure of George's foot, and promised to make a first-rate pair of winter boots for him. Business being attended to, the boys had a good time with the shoemaker's children. The settlers were so few, and so far apart, that the children did not often have company, and when they did, it was quite a treat to them.

"The shoemaker's children teased George pretty hard

to stay all night with them, but as his father and mother expected him back, he thought it would not do to stop. So they set out for home, in good season. The path was through the woods, the whole distance. A stranger would have found it pretty difficult to follow it; but the boys had often been over the route, alone and with their parents, and they were not afraid of losing their way. They were still in the merry mood, and began to race homeward, making the old woods ring with their shouts and laughter.

“When George’s mates had got about half way home, they suddenly missed their companion. They listened, to see if he was coming, but they heard nothing of him. They shouted ‘George! George!’ at the top of their voices, but no answer came back.

“‘He’s hid behind a tree, and wants to frighten us, and make us think he’s lost,’ said one of the boys.

“‘Maybe he fell down when we were running, and hurt himself,’ suggested the other.

“They concluded, on the whole, to see if they could find him; so they ran back nearly a mile, but they saw nothing of him. They shouted his name, again and again, but there was no answer to their cry. Then they

concluded that he had played a trick upon them. He must have hid himself, or he had run on ahead of them, or else he had suddenly changed his mind, and gone back to spend the night at the shoemaker's. At any rate, it was still broad day-light, and he knew the path, and could easily find his way home. Accordingly, they turned about, and went home. They passed George's cabin, but they merely told his father that he was coming, and said nothing about what had happened.

"The sun went down, and it was fast growing dark, but George did not come. The family began to feel alarmed. Mr. Brown went over to the cabins of the other two boys, and got them to repeat to him all that they knew about George's absence. They described the part of the road where they first missed him, and told how they went back, and shouted, and the conclusion they had come to. Mr. Brown felt somewhat easier, on learning these particulars, for he thought it very probable that George went back to spend the night with the shoemaker's boys.

"Early the next morning, Mr. Brown started after George. He went to the shoemaker's, but his heart sunk within him, when they told him the boy was not

there. He hastened over the settlement, and gave the alarm, and all the people turned out, to search for the lost boy. They found the spot where they supposed he turned out of the path; for there were the foot-prints of the boy, leading into the woods. They followed them, a few yards, and found that they disappeared at the foot of a great oak-tree. Poor George's fate is a mystery to this day, for this is the last trace that ever was found of him."

"Did n't he climb the tree, to get out of the way of wild beasts?" suggested Ralph.

"I am told that the branches of the trees in these forests are so high up, that it would be almost impossible for a child to climb them," replied Aunt Fanny. "Besides, if he did climb the tree, what became of him when he came down?"

"Perhaps he was dragged up the tree by a bear, and left in the hollow trunk—I've heard of such things," said Alice.

"But there was no track of any animal in the snow, and no stains of blood, nor shreds of clothing, nor any thing else to show that he had been killed by a beast," replied her aunt.

"Then some great bird must have flown down and picked him up," suggested George; "could n't an eagle carry off a boy, aunt?"

"I should think not," replied his aunt. "They sometimes carry off lambs, but I guess a boy bigger than Ralph would be more than they could master. Besides, I believe eagles are not very plenty in Canada."

"Well, if I had been there," said Ella, "I should have thought that some evil spirit carried him off. What else could it have been?"

"I never heard of an evil spirit doing such a thing," replied Aunt Fanny, "and I don't think the mystery can be cleared up in that way. All the evil spirits we need fear, are those that get into our hearts."

"But what do *you* think became of the boy, Aunt Fanny?" inquired Ella.

"I have no idea what became of him," she replied. "But because the people could not find him, it is not certain that he was dead. It was a common thing in the new settlements, for children and even grown people to get lost; and I have heard of quite a number of instances where the missing persons were given up for dead, and yet came to light again, after several years.

One boy who got lost in the forests, was carried away by a party of Indians who happened to discover him, and it was seven years before he could escape from them. He was treated well, and they made quite a little Indian of him; but he never forgot his childhood-home, or the manner in which he was taken from it, and he took the first opportunity to make his escape from his captives."

"O, aunt!" exclaimed Ella, "why didn't you put these two stories together, and make it turn out that George Brown was carried off by the Indians, and came back again, after every body thought he was dead? That would have made a complete story."

"Perhaps I should have done so, if I had not set out to relate a real adventure," replied her aunt.

"The story was good enough as it was," said Ralph; "it puts the prize story of 'The Lost Boy' into the shade, completely."

"I don't like to have a story end so," replied Ella; "I want to know what became of the boy."

"But I like it all the better for that," added Ralph "there's a mystery about it, and I like mysteries."

"And that's just what I hate—mysteries, and spec

ters, and ghosts, and goblins, and all such things," said Ella.

"That's because you are so superstitious," said her mother. "You would not be afraid of goblins and ghosts, if you did not think so much about them. For my part, I think we have enough *real* dangers to fear, without troubling ourselves about those that have no existence. But it is time that you young folks were abed. George is almost asleep, now. Ralph, you may go down to the kitchen and bring up the lamps."

A half-visible shadow near the door glided out of the room, at these words. A minute or two after, Ralph appeared, with a flaming lamp—that mortal enemy of evening ghosts and twilight musings—that inexorable extinguisher of sentiment and superstition.

CHAPTER IX.

WORK AND PLAY.

"THE carriage will be here in ten minutes, mother," said Ralph, one morning, about a fortnight after Aunt Fanny's arrival in Boston.

"Well, we are almost ready," replied Mrs. Preston, who was trying to squeeze a few more articles into a trunk already full, while, at the same time, she was giving sundry cautions to the children, mingled with various hints and directions to Mr. Preston, Aunt Fanny, and Mary, the Irish girl.

The coach soon came, and after a few more parting words, Mrs. Preston and Alice seated themselves in it, and were on their way to the railroad-station. They were going to Vermont, to spend a few weeks with the mother and sister of Mrs. Preston. Aunt Fanny was to keep house during her sister's absence. One object

she had in view, in coming to Boston, was to induce Mrs. Preston to release herself from her cares for a short time, and go in search of health among the green hills of Vermont.

"Now, children," said Mr. Preston, as the coach rolled away, "Aunt Fanny is mistress here, for the present, and I want you to obey her, and make her as little trouble as possible. Will you remember?"

The children all promised to comply with their father's wish. Ella, in fact, proposed to do something more than this. She wished to divide with her aunt the labors and responsibilities of housekeeper. There were certain duties in the family of which Alice was accustomed to take charge. Ella proposed to attend to these, during her sister's absence, and her aunt had agreed to the arrangement. As she enumerated the various things she intended to do, her father smiled, and said he was afraid she had undertaken so much that she would accomplish nothing.

It was now nearly a week since Ella had adopted her last resolution of amendment. Thus far, she had kept it tolerably well, though she had slightly infringed upon it once or twice. During the week, her aunt had

occasionally alluded to the subject, and she commended Ella very warmly for her good conduct, and tried to encourage her to persevere; but after all, Ella had not been very sorely tempted, and perhaps her success was to be attributed as much to this as to any thing else.

The next morning, Ella arose earlier than usual. It was Saturday, and she had got to sweep and dust the parlor before going to school; for this was one of the duties she had voluntarily assumed. Although her aunt had at first some doubts about allowing her to undertake this job, she finally consented to it, after giving Ella such cautions and directions as she thought necessary. The care of this apartment had been intrusted to Alice, for more than a year, but Ella had occasionally helped her sister at the weekly cleaning of the room, and consequently she knew what was to be done. She went to work just as she had seen her sister do, and had completed the sweeping of the room, before Mary rang the breakfast-bell.

After breakfast, Ella returned to the parlor, to dust the furniture. This was an operation that required much time and care. The mantel-piece, the what-not and the large round table were covered with little

knickknacks, that had to be taken up separately and wiped. There were books, and flower-vases, and colored glass bottles, and daguerreotypes, and curious shells, and other fancy articles, too numerous to mention, as the advertisements say. Ella handled these carefully, for the most part; but before she got through, by an unlucky slip of her fingers, a pretty Cologne-bottle fell upon the floor, and was shivered into fragments. She hastily gathered up the pieces, and without stopping to waste many regrets over the mishap, finished dusting the room.

Ella now set about preparing herself for school. She could not keep the broken bottle out of mind, and she began to consider what she had better do about it. She thought of keeping the matter secret, and replacing the broken article by a new one; but she had not money enough to do this. Conscience said, "Go and tell your aunt all about it, and you will feel better." But another voice from within whispered, "No, what's the use of that? If you did break the bottle, it's nothing to her. You can tell your mother about it, when she comes home, and that will answer every purpose." "But if you hide it from your aunt," said con-

science, "will you not be tempted to hide it from your mother, too? Your aunt is in your mother's place, and you ought not to conceal this thing from her." So the two inner voices reasoned, and Ella was perplexed to decide between them.

"Well, Ella, have you dusted the parlor, and put every thing to rights, so that I need n't be afraid to take callers into it, if any should come?" inquired Aunt Fanny, while this conflict was going on in Ella's bosom.

"Yes, ma'am," replied Ella, "I believe it is all right."

"That is clever," added her aunt; "I begin to think I've got a pretty smart assistant, after all."

It was a moment of painful suspense to Ella. If she intended to inform her aunt of the accident she had met with, this was the proper time to do so. She wavered a minute or two, and then the favorable opportunity was gone. The conversation was turned to other topics, and Ella went to school without confessing the matter that was on her mind.

During the forenoon, Ella came to the conclusion that she was under no obligation to inform her aunt or her father of the broken bottle. She meant to explain

the matter to her mother, on her return, and she thought that was all that duty required of her. On her return from school, her aunt said to her—

“I went into the parlor this forenoon, Ella, to see if you had done your work well; and really, I must say that you deserve much credit. I did not suppose that you could make yourself so useful about house. The room looked as neat as a pin, and but for one thing, I never should have suspected that a green hand had been at work upon it.”

“What was that?” inquired Ella, the color suddenly coming to her face.

“There were one or two articles that appeared as if overlooked when you dusted, that was all,” replied her aunt. “But that is nothing. There are so many articles in that room, it is not at all strange that you should skip some, the first time.”

Aunt Fanny had a pleasant way of saying even disagreeable things; and if she had occasion to censure, she usually did it in such a manner as to encourage the delinquent to do better. Ella was apt to slight her work, and perhaps this fault was perceptible in the parlor, that morning; although, every thing consid-

ered, the little house-cleaner had done herself credit. She felt relieved, when she found that this was all her aunt had to say about her morning's work. The broken bottle was still a secret with herself.

In the afternoon, Ella appeared to be very busily engaged upon some sewing of her own. She did not seem inclined to tell any one what the work was, but it looked like a small child's frock. She labored very steadily upon it for an hour or two, and then went out, and was absent some time. On her return, she seemed to be in quite a merry mood.

"Now, Aunt Fanny," she said, "I'll tell you what I've been about, this afternoon. I did n't like to tell you before, for fear you would persuade me out of it."

"I am sorry to hear you talk so," replied her aunt. "I hope you have done nothing that I should disapprove."

"O, there was no harm in it," said Ella; "only—only—well, I thought you *might possibly* think it was n't best, and I did n't want to be cheated out of it. But you won't say it was improper, I know you won't."

"I am not so sure of that," replied her aunt. "From

the way you attempt to forestall my opinion, I should judge that you had done something wrong."

"What do you mean by that?" inquired Ella.

"I mean that you are trying to prepossess my judgment in your favor, before I know any thing about the facts in the case. When a person does that, there is reason to suspect that every thing is not all right."

"Well, aunt," continued Ella, "I'll tell you just what we've done, and then you can decide whether it was improper. You know Joe Blakely, that lives just below here, on this side of the street? But, come to think of it, I guess you don't know him. He's a great, strapping boy, as big as our Oscar, and so green and good-natured, that he is really silly. Well, he's all the time making fun of two or three of us girls, who live right about here. We don't any of us feel acquainted with him, for he has n't lived here long; but he has spoken to us several times, and repeats things after us, when we're in the street, and imitates us in a squeaking voice; and yesterday, little Julia Long and I were walking along the street,—Julia had her doll in her arms,—when we met him; and what should he do, but twist up his handkerchief, and hold it in his arms as

though it was a baby, until we passed him. Well, we girls had got all out of patience with him, and begun to think how we could come up with the saucy fellow. So I proposed that we should all take hold, and make a great rag-baby, and send it to Joe, with a letter. And that's what we've been about, this afternoon. We made the awfulest looking thing you ever saw, for a doll, and did it up nicely in a bundle, and marked his name on it, and sent it to his house ; and in the bundle we put a letter, saying that 'the girls of the neighborhood begged him to accept of this slight token of esteem, as a reward for his good manners, and a tribute to his good sense.' We mean all the boys around here shall hear of it, and I guess they'll plague him about it till he gets sick enough of it. Now don't you think we served him right, aunt? Would n't you have done just the same thing, if you had been in our place?"

"I think it very likely that I should," replied Aunt Fanny.

"There! I knew you would say so," exclaimed Ella, quite pleased to find that her aunt was disposed to coincide with her.

"But I have n't said that it was proper," added Aunt Fanny.

"Well, if you would have done it, I don't think it could have been very improper," said Ella.

"But I sometimes do things that I am sorry for afterward," replied her aunt. "It is a good rule, however, not to do a thing, when we are in doubt whether it would be right or wrong, and I try to act on that principle. In regard to the joke you have just been playing upon the boy, I do not feel competent to decide whether it was perfectly proper or not. Under certain circumstances, it would have been a bold and impudent thing, for a party of girls to send such a present to a boy older than themselves; but under other circumstances, it might have been a harmless way of rebuking him for teasing them. If your acquaintance with him was such as to warrant taking a liberty of that kind, and if he really had annoyed you in the way you spoke of, perhaps there was no harm in doing as you did. But as a general thing, I do not like 'practical jokes, as they are called. It is seldom that they are perfectly harmless, and at the best, they are annoying to those who are made the victims of them."

"Well Joe Blakely deserves to be annoyed a little, for he's annoyed us enough, if that's all," said Ella.

"Then your rule is 'tit for tat,' is it?" inquired her aunt, with a smile.

"Yes, it is, when I'm joking with any body; there's no harm in that, is there?" inquired Ella.

"I suppose not, if there is no malice in it," replied her aunt.

"Oh, we don't feel any malice toward Joe," said Ella. "How I should like to be where I could see him, when he opens the bundle! I wonder what he'll say! He's so good-natured that there's no such thing as getting him mad; but I guess he'll feel cheap enough, when all the boys ask him how his baby does?"

Ralph's voice was now heard, in the yard, and Ella ran out, to inform him of the trick that had been played upon Joe. Ralph was commissioned to spread the news, and before evening all the boys in the neighborhood had heard and laughed about Joe Blakely's present.

After tea, as Ella and her aunt were sitting by themselves, engaged in mending the boys' stockings, and talking about various matters, Miss Lee took a bit of

colored glass from her work-box, and handing it to Ella, asked her if she knew where it came from. Ella replied that she did not, but she seemed to be a little confused by the question.

"I found it on the parlor carpet, this morning, and at first, I thought you must have broken something in sweeping; but I suppose you would have told me, if you had," said Aunt Fanny.

"I did break something," stammered Ella, blushing to her very temples; "it was a little Cologne-bottle, and that must be a piece of it. I thought it was of no use to tell you about it, but I certainly meant to tell mother; I should n't think of trying to keep such a thing from her."

"I should feel a little more confidence in you, hereafter, if you had not tried to keep it from me," replied her aunt.

"Well, aunt, I was going to tell you," said Ella; "but I thought you would n't care any thing about it, so I concluded to tell mother, and no body else."

"It does n't concern me, to be sure," replied her aunt, mildly; "but as I am now housekeeper here, if any accidents happen about the premises, it seems

no more than fair that I should be informed of them."

She said no more, for she saw that Ella felt the reproof, and was ashamed that she had tried to conceal the mishap. Ella, indeed, felt badly about it. She was conscious that she had fallen somewhat in her aunt's esteem, by this unfortunate affair, while she had gained nothing, by the attempted concealment. Ralph and George now came in, and the conversation was turned to other subjects.

Late in the evening, after the children had gone to bed, Miss Lee was startled by a sudden scream from Ella, who had slept alone, since Alice went away. The scream was followed by an unusual uproar in the boys' room, and she ran up, to see what the matter was.

"There's something in my bed!" exclaimed Ella, as her aunt opened the chamber door. "I had blown my lamp out, and was getting into bed, when I felt something inside, and I hopped out quick enough, I can tell you."

Ella could not muster courage to examine the bed, and see who or what the intruder was; but her aunt quickly stripped down the covering, when lo! there ap-

peared a great, coarse-looking *rag baby*, which Ella immediately recognized as the one she had sent to Joe Blakley, that very afternoon! As her aunt held the grotesque caricature up to the light, she could not help



smiling, while a shout of laughter came from the entry where Ralph and George, in their shirts and pantaloons, stood peeping into the half-open door. There was a piece of paper pinned to one of the doll's hands. On

examining it, Ella found that it contained the following lines written with a pencil :

“Miss Ella, your beautiful cherub has strayed away, but the family likeness is so strong, that I knew it at once, and now send it back to its anxious mother, with a slight token of my regards. JOE.”

The "token" referred to, consisted of a few sugar-plums, tied up in a piece of rag, in a convenient form for sucking! Ella was at first half inclined to be offended, at these developments, which afforded so much amusement to her brothers; but her aunt told her that those who played jokes upon others, must learn to take a joke without offence, and she concluded to treat the matter pleasantly. She accused Ralph of betraying the secret to Joe, and then aiding him in his retaliation; but he declared that he knew nothing about it. George, however, refused to answer any questions, and she transferred her suspicions to him.

The fact was, Ella, in her anxiety to have the boys of the neighborhood informed of the affair, had overshoot the mark; for Joe got wind of it, before he went home. He accordingly planned his revenge, and

coaxed George into his service ; and so "the laugh" that was intended for him, was nicely turned upon Ella, who he rightly suspected of being at the bottom of the scrape.

"It is Saturday night," said Aunt Fanny, interrupting the dispute between Ella and the boys ; "you had better go to bed, and let the matter drop until Monday morning ;" and she went down stairs, leaving them in the dark, and taking with her the articles that had just caused so much amusement, that the sight of them might not revive their mirth on the morrow.

CHAPTER X.

HIGHBURG PEOPLE.

IT was a rule in Mr. Preston's family, that the children should not stay out after dark, in the evening without special permission from their mother. Oscar, after he got to be a large boy, was in the habit of going and coming when he pleased. He was often in the street until bed-time, and occasionally even later; and his parents, though they thought little about it then, were afterward convinced that much of the trouble they had with him, was owing to the acquaintances he made and the habits he acquired in these evening hours, away from home. They were careful, therefore, that the younger boys should not be exposed to these evil influences.

At this season of the year, when the evenings were very short, and very warm, the twilight hours were often spent in conversation, in the sitting-room, with

open windows, and no light but what came from the stars, or from the glowing western horizon. The children and their aunt were thus seated, on the Monday evening after the events related in the preceding chapter. The children were talking over the "rag-baby" affair

"I saw Joe, this noon," said Ella. "He looked as smiling and roguish as you can imagine; but I put on a long face, and tried to look just as cross as I could. So I was going to march right by him, as bold as you please; but I declare if the corners of my mouth did n't begin to turn up, and I was in a broad grin before I knew it. O, I was so provoked with myself! And he giggled right out—the impudent fellow!"

"I should like to see that boy; Ralph, you must bring him in here, some day," said Aunt Fanny.

"O don't, I beg of you," exclaimed Ella.

"Ella pretends she doesn't like him, but I know better," said Ralph. "She wouldn't have so much to say about him, if she did n't like him."

"No such thing," exclaimed Ella; "I talk about him because he takes so much notice of me, that's all. You must think I have a funny taste, to like that great awkward, long-legged boy."

"It is strange that you don't get acquainted with each other," said her aunt; "either he or you must be very shy."

"I'll bring him in here, before long, and introduce them to each other," remarked Ralph.

"No you shan't—I won't speak to him, if you do," said Ella, very firmly.

"O, yes, you will," added her aunt. "He's not a bad boy, is he, Ralph?"

"No, ma'am, he's a real honest, clever fellow," replied Ralph. "He's rather roguish, but it's only in fun, and he does n't mean any harm."

"I should think he was something like Ronald, from your description," said Aunt Fanny.

"How large is Ronald, now?" inquired George.

"O, he is a good deal larger than Ralph," replied his aunt. "I should think he was as tall as Ella, and stouter."

Ronald was a boy who lived in the family which Aunt Fanny regarded as her home, in Vermont. The head of this family was Mrs. Page, the sister of Mrs. Preston and Miss Lee. She was a widow, and had but one child, a son about eighteen years of age. Ronald

was a poor Canadian boy, an orphan, who was taken into the family, when he was quite small.

"Cousin Marcus is quite a young man, now, I suppose," said Ella.

"Yes, he is as tall as your father," replied her aunt.

"Is he as fond of Ronald as ever?" inquired Ella.

"Yes, he thinks as much of him as if he was his brother; and Ronald sets every thing by Marcus."

"It is queer that they should like each other so, when there's such a difference in their ages," said Ella.

"Marcus has been the making of Ronald, so far," said Aunt Fanny. "When he went to live with your Aunt Page, he was the wildest child that ever I saw, without exception; but they have made a real good boy of him, and Marcus deserves most of the credit of it. Mr. Upton, the principal of our Academy, calls Marcus 'the boy-tamer,' and I think he deserves the title. He has had almost the whole management of Ronald, for about two years. He oversees his studies, and lays out his work, and makes laws for him, and punishes him when necessary, just as a father would do."

"Why did Aunt Page take him, if he was such a bad boy?" inquired George.

"She took him out of pity," replied his aunt. "But he was not exactly a *bad* boy—he was only wild, untrained, and ignorant. He was more like a little savage, than any thing else. His parents were poor emigrants, from Canada. Soon after they came to Highburg, they both had an attack of fever, and died within a week, leaving poor Ronald without home or friends. He was about eight years old, at that time. Some of the neighbors tried to find a home for him, but nobody wanted to take him. Then your Aunt Page offered to keep him a few weeks, until a place could be found for him. She found he was very bright and lively, but he had a great many strange ways, and was wholly unused to restraints. She thought it would make her too much care, to keep him, and had concluded to give him up; but Marcus took quite a fancy to him, and finally persuaded his mother to let him stay with them."

"Does Ronald go to the Academy?" inquired Ralph.

"No, he goes to the District School; but he will probably go to the Academy next winter. When he came to live with us, he had not learnt his let-

ters. Marcus taught him to read, before he ever went to school."

"I should n't think he would mind Marcus, he's so young," said George.

"He does obey him very well," replied his aunt "but they had a good deal of difficulty with him, at first. He had never been taught to obey, and Mrs. Page had to be very firm and strict with him, before he would submit to the rules of the house. He was the hardest boy to punish that I ever knew. He did n't seem to mind a whipping any more than some children do a scolding. I remember one time, when he had done something wrong, your aunt promised him a whipping, at night; but a little while after, he went to her, and asked her to give it to him then, as he was going off to play in the afternoon, and he should be thinking of it all the time, and it would spoil his fun, if she deferred it till night. She used to have a particular chamber, where she punished him. It was called the 'spare room,' and it was unfurnished, and contained only one or two trunks. One day, when he was going up to this room, to be punished, he said, 'Come, mother, hurry; if I must take it, I want it to be

over with quick ;' and he ran up the stairs, as lively as ever."

"Does he call Aunt Page mother?" inquired George.

"Yes, he calls her mother, and me aunt, just as Marcus does. But I was going to tell you about that spare room. When about to punish him, one day, your aunt repeated the saying, 'Spare the rod, and spoil the child.' He looked as innocent as could be, and said, 'Then I don't see why you call this the spare room, for *you* don't spare the rod, mother.' He used to call that room his prison, for he was sometimes shut up in it for hours together. The worst thing about him, when he went to live there, was a habit he had of lying. Your aunt had a great deal of trouble with him, on account of this habit, the first year. One time, when he was caught in a falsehood, he refused to own that he had done wrong, or to say that he was sorry for it; and he was kept a close prisoner in the spare room a day and night, before he yielded."

"Does Marcus punish him very often?" inquired George, who seemed to take quite an interest in this account of his cousin by adoption.

"No," replied his aunt, "he seldom needs to be pun-

ished now; and when he does, all the penalty that Marcus generally imposes, is to deny him some privilege. He is still a little wild and mischievous, but he is as good-natured and happy a fellow as you ever saw; and on the whole he is a very good boy."

"How I should like to see him!" exclaimed Ella. "I should think you might let him come down to Boston, and make us a visit."

"Perhaps he will come, one of these days," said her aunt; "but the journey costs considerable money, and besides, he is too young to travel alone. I hope you children will go up and make him and Marcus a visit, some time."

"It's too bad that we can't go," replied Ella; "I lotted upon going up to Highburg, this next vacation; but mother and Alice have gone, and I suppose the rest of us must stay at home."

This was spoken in a complaining tone, and Ella, herself, felt ashamed of the remark, before the words were cold. Her aunt mildly reproved her, by saying—

"You must blame me for that, dear; your mother would have much rather sent you and the other children up there, and staid to home herself, but I per-

suaded her to go, because I knew her health was suffering here in the city."

Ella had felt not a little disappointed, that Alice was chosen, instead of herself, to accompany her mother ; but she had not suffered this feeling to reveal itself, and the thoughtless remark just dropped, was the only word of complaint that had escaped her lips. She had had the good sense and the self-control to repress the *language* of complaint ; it was a pity that she did not go a little further, and repress the secret *feelings* which prompted the tongue.

After a few moments' silence, Aunt Fanny asked Ella if she would not favor them with a song. As usual, she needed a little coaxing ; but she soon seated herself at the pianoforte, and, by the sense of touch, found the right chords, and accompanied herself, while she sung a song, of which the following verses formed a part :

' Do they miss me at home—do they miss me !
'Twould be an assurance most dear
To know that this moment some loved ones
Were saying, I wish he were here ;
To feel that the group at the fireside
Were thinking of me as I roam ;
Oh yes, 'twould be joy beyond measure
To know that they miss me at home.

“When twilight approaches—the season
That ever is sacred to song—
Does some one repeat my name over,
And sigh that I tarry so long?
And is there no chord in the music
That’s missed when my voice is away?
And a chord in each heart that awaketh
Regret at my wearisome stay?”

“Very good, and quite appropriate, too,” said Aunt Fanny, when Ella had concluded; “I hope you will always prefer such songs, to the low negro melodies and silly love-ditties that are so common.”

“I have n’t sung that before, for a good while,” said Ella. “Mother can’t bear to hear it—it reminds her of Oscar, and makes her feel bad.”

“Poor boy! how much he will have to answer for!” exclaimed Aunt Fanny. “But I was thinking of your mother, and how we ‘miss her at home,’ and how she is perhaps thinking of us, at this very time. I can imagine just what they are about, at home. Old Mr. Burr, the hired man, is sitting down on the door-step, smoking his pipe, and killing musquitoes. Marcus is stretched out upon the settle, resting himself, and planning the work for to-morrow. Your mother is sitting in a great rocking-chair, near the west window, looking at

that beautiful star ; and Ronald is by her side, asking all sorts of queer questions about Boston—or, as likely as not, he is inquiring all about cousins Ralph, and George, and Ella.”

“Does he call us his cousins?” inquired Ralph.

“Yes, the poor fellow has no relatives of his own, that he knows of, and as it seems to be some comfort to him to imagine that he has got a mother, and brother, and a good lot of uncles, and aunts, and cousins, we are careful never to disturb his pleasant illusion.”

“And Aunt Page—what is she about? you did n’t mention her,” said Ella.

“Let me see—she has just finished straining the milk, and has set it away in the buttery, to cool; and now she leaves her lamp in the pantry, to avoid drawing insects, and comes and sits down by the side of your mother, and begins to talk about old times, when they were girls.”

“There’s another member of the family that you forgot, aunt,” said Ralph.

“O, yes, there’s Rover. Well, he’s found a soft, cool place, in the middle of the road, where he thinks he shall be sure to hear if any stranger comes near the

premises, and there he 's taking a nap, unless the musquitoes happen to be out pretty strong. And there 's Netty, the cat, too ; she 's sitting on the window-seat, watching the fire-flies in the field. There, I 've made you quite a picture, and it all grew out of Ella's song. Now can't we have another ?"

"Ralph, you sing your 'Cuckoo' song, and I'll play the accompaniment," said Ella.

"Yes, Ralph," said his aunt, "I like to hear you sing, and you have n't favored me once, yet, during this visit."

Ralph then sung the following song, which he had learned at school :

"THE BOY AND CUCKOO.

"A little boy went out to shoot, one day,
And carried his arrows and bow ;
For guns are dangerous playthings, they say,
In the hands of small children, you know.
A little bird sat on a cherry tree,
And whistled, and said, 'No, you can't shoot me !
Cuckoo! Cuckoo! Cuckoo!'

"Just wait,' said the boy, 'till I 'm near enough,
And see if I don't shoot you through.'
D'ye think,' said the bird, 'that I 'm not up to snuff
To sit and be shot at by you ?
I think you are really kind, dear sir ;
An arrow is not to my mind, dear sir ;
Cuckoo! Cuckoo! Cuckoo!'

“The little boy drew his bow to his eye,
And aimed it right straight for awhile;
The bird, he laughed, and away he did fly;
‘A miss is as good as a mile.’
The little boy threw down his bow and cried,
The little bird laughed, till it almost died,
‘Cuckoo! Cuckoo! Cuckoo!’”

“Well done, Ralph!” exclaimed Aunt Fanny. “And now I think we had better make preparations for going to bed, for it is past nine o’clock.”

CHAPTER XI.

BUGBEARS.

ELLA was not a very courageous girl ; but as is often the case with children, she was much more troubled with imaginary than with real dangers. No tall ghost, or walking specter, had ever appeared to her, and she had never actually seen a “bugbear” of any kind ; and yet she seemed to be always expecting to meet some such frightful object, especially in the evening, notwithstanding her parents had tried hard to convince her that ghosts and bugbears existed only in the brains of the timid, the ignorant and the superstitious.

There were also other terrors, not quite so shadowy and undefinable in their nature, of which Ella stood very much in awe ; such as noxious animals, and midnight burglars and murderers. But though these terrors do actually clothe themselves in flesh and blood, sometimes, the danger from them, in any well-ordered community,

is so very small, that no one need lose much sleep on account of them.

You will not wonder that it was something of a trial to Ella to sleep alone. She had slept with Alice, ever since she could remember; and now that she had exclusive possession of the bed-room, she felt lonesome and fidgety, at night, and dreaded the return of the hour of retiring. She was ashamed to tell her aunt she was afraid to sleep alone; but she hinted to her, very plainly, that one bed might suffice for them both. Aunt Fanny, however, did not choose to take the hint. Perhaps she thought that Ella was old enough to sleep alone, and that it would be more comfortable for both, during the sultry weather, to occupy separate beds.

Since her mother went away, Ella had taken upon herself the responsibility of seeing that the house was properly fastened up at night. This she did, not by going over the premises herself, but by questioning and admonishing those whose duty it was to see that all things were left safe. Almost every evening, as Mary passed the sitting-room door, on her way to bed, something like the following dialogue would take place between her and Ella:

"Did you bolt the gate, Mary?"

"Yis, I did that."

"And lock the back door?"

"Of coorse I did."

"And fasten all the basement windows?"

"Ah, ye need n't be lookin' after the thaves to-night; it's all shet up tight, I tell ye."

One evening, after this colloquy had been gone through with, as usual, Mr. Preston looked up from the paper he was reading, and said,

"That reminds me of something, Ella. You have talked so much about thieves, lately, that I happened to come across a copy of the criminal returns of the State, yesterday, and I looked into the matter, to see what the probability was of our being disturbed by them. The conclusion I came to, was, that there is about one chance in a thousand of thieves breaking into our house. That is, there are nine hundred and ninety-nine chances in our favor, to every one against us. Do you think that is a very alarming risk to run?"

"Why, no, father," replied Ella laughing.

"Then why do you torment yourself with the fear of housebreakers?" inquired her father.

"O, I don't torment myself," replied Ella. "I only think of it once in a while, that's all. There's no harm in that, is there?"

"You think of it altogether too much, that's the trouble," said Mr. Preston. "It is right enough to guard against thieves, by locking up the house, nights; but it is of no use to worry ourselves about them, until they actually come. As I said before, there is n't more than one chance in a thousand of their coming; and if they should come, there is n't one chance in ten that they would molest you. If you will multiply one thousand by ten, you will find out pretty near what your chances are of being attacked by these bugbears of yours, that you think so much about."

This conversation did not prove of much immediate benefit to Ella. She soon after went up to bed; but the foolish night phantoms of her brain were even more lively than usual, and she tried in vain to banish them from her mind. They kept possession until she fell asleep; and then they arrayed themselves in still more frightful forms, and appeared to her in her dreams.

From one of these painful dreams, Ella was suddenly awakened by a noise in her room. She thrust her head

within the bed-covering, under the firm conviction that somebody was in the chamber. But even in this position, she could hear the movements of the intruder very plainly, although it was evident that he was moving as noiselessly as possible. She heard his cautious step across the room, and the rustling of wearing apparel which he was apparently selecting from the closet. She was too frightened to look out from her retreat, or to give the alarm of danger. Her body was covered with cold sweat, and she trembled with terror, but she supposed that her own safety depended upon her keeping perfectly quiet. She wondered what her father would think, now, about there being but one chance in a thousand of being robbed. How she wished she could apprise him of what was going on, without exposing herself to danger!

It sounded, now, as if the thief was rummaging among the bureau drawers. Ella thought she heard him crowding his pockets with plunder. How leisurely he was about it! She waited in vain to hear him depart. About half an hour had elapsed, and still the noise continued. Ella began to recover a little from her fright. Possibly, there was nobody in her room, after

all. By-and-by she mustered courage to peep out from under the sheets. The gray light of morning was already shining in the windows, and as soon as her head was fairly uncovered, the origin of the mysterious noises stood revealed to her eyes. She had left a window open a few inches at the top. During the night, quite a breeze had sprung up, and the action of the wind upon the curtain, alternately drawing it out and blowing it in, caused the rustling noises, which Ella's lively imagination had clothed with such terrors. She kept the story of her fright to herself, and resolved that the wind should not have a chance to play another such trick upon her, very soon.

A few evenings after this, as Ella was about going to bed, and was making her usual examination, to satisfy herself that there was no intruder in the room, she was startled by the appearance of something dark under the bed, which looked as if it might be a man, snugly stowed away in one corner. The position of the lamp was such that she could not see very distinctly; but on lifting up the counterpane on the side of the bed toward the light, the figure of a person in a crouching position was plainly revealed. His face was concealed, but she

distinctly saw his boots, and the back of the head. She instantly sprung into the entry, with a scream which was heard all over the house, and hastened down stairs. Her father and aunt, who were in the sitting-room, came running out, to see what the matter was. Poor Ella, pale with fright, could scarcely explain the cause of the alarm. After putting two or three questions to her, Mr. Preston learned that "there was a man under the bed," and he started up stairs to look after him. Ella tried to restrain her aunt from following him, but in vain.

On entering the haunted room, the "man" was just emerging from under the bed, and proved to be little George, who had arrayed himself in an old outside coat and an old pair of boots that were formerly worn by Oscar, and in this strange garb, assisted by the darkness of his retreat, had imposed upon Ella's eyes and fears. He was laughing heartily at the complete success of his plot; but his fun was brought to a sudden termination by his father, who seized him by the collar, and shaking him in an angry manner, threatened the direst punishment, if he ever played such a trick as that upon any of the family again. Nothing, probably, but the presence of his aunt, saved him from a whipping upon

the spot ; for though she said nothing, Mr. Preston did not indulge in his temper before her as he would have done had she been absent. It was one of his greatest faults, that he did not know how to control himself when his children offended him.

Ella, from the foot of the stairs, heard what was going on, and now ventured to return to her chamber. She felt a little mortified, that George's trick had been so successful, and she was sorry that the culprit was to escape so easily. George tried to offer some excuse to his father, for what he had done ; but Mr. Preston cut him short, and ordered all the children to bed, in a tone that admitted of no delay or parleying.

Ella's nerves had received such a shock, that she did not easily fall asleep that night. As she lay awake, thinking over the scene in which she had acted so ridiculous a part, her hard feelings toward George increased, and she determined to contrive some way to "pay him off" for his mischievous prank.

The next morning, at the breakfast-table, Mr. Preston alluded to the event of the evening previous.

"Ralph," he inquired, "did you have a hand in that scrape, last evening?"

"No, sir," replied Ralph.

"Did n't you know any thing about it?"

"I knew George was going to play some joke upon Ella, but I did n't know exactly what."

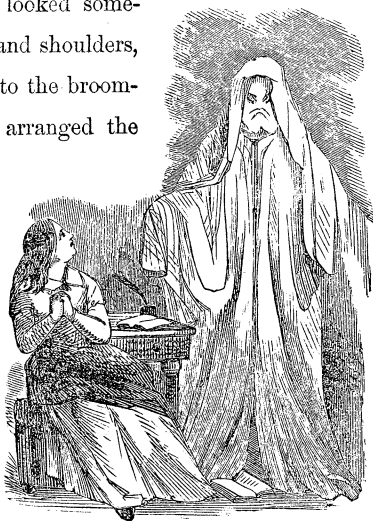
"If you knew of it beforehand, why did n't you inform some of us about it? You are old enough to know better than to frighten a girl in that way, if George is not. If you ever know any thing of the kind, again, I wish you to inform me of it in season to put a stop to it."

"I suppose he did n't think any harm could come out of it," said Aunt Fanny, who noticed that Ralph was very sensitive to his father's reproof.

"But there *is* harm in it," continued Mr. Preston, "and I don't want to have any such tricks practiced in this house again. I have heard of people being frightened in that way so that they never got over it."

"So have I," added Aunt Fanny. "When I was at the seminary in Greenvale, a case of this kind happened, that came very near ruining the mind of a beautiful young lady. One evening, several of the girls, wishing to make some sport, thought they would

see if they could get up a ghost. They chose one of their number, to act the character. In the first place, they bound a broom firmly to her body, with the top sticking up two or three feet above her head. Then they took a pillow, and after tying a string around the middle, so that it looked something like a head and shoulders, they fastened this to the broomstick. They next arranged the dress and drapery of the figure, in such a way that it looked like some great giant. They were so well satisfied with their contrivance, that they concluded to try the effects of



it upon the nerves of one of the scholars. So the apparition marched boldly into the room of a young lady, who was sitting alone. Her back was toward the door, and she turned round, to see who

was coming. The moment her eyes fell upon the frightful object, they became immovably fixed, and she did not stir a muscle, or make the slightest noise. The other girls, who staid in the background now saw that something was the matter, and they rushed in, and began to tell their victim that it was only a joke; but she took no notice of them. She was in a stupor, and saw nothing but the tall ghost. It was some time before they could arouse her; and when she came out of that state, she was a raving maniac."

"Did she ever get over it?" inquired Ella.

"Yes, her reason returned, after a while," replied Aunt Fanny; "but she suffered a great deal, and her mind and body both received such a shock, that I doubt whether she ever got entirely over the fright."

"It is a cruel and wicked thing to play such tricks upon people, and I never could see any wit in it either," continued Mr. Preston. "At the same time, it is foolish to be frightened at every little trifle. It is strange, Ella, that you could n't tell George from a man."

"But 't was dark, under the bed, father," replied

Ella. "I saw his big boots, and I thought it was a man all cuddled into the corner."

"You had better look a little sharper, next time, before you frighten us out of our wits," replied her father

"I did n't think there was any harm in it," said George, after his father had left the room. "I knew El was all the time fidgeting about robbers and ghosts, and I heard her tell you she always looked under the bed, before she undressed ; so I thought I would scare her a little, but I did n't suppose she would make such a fuss about it."

"I wish father had made a little more fuss about it, and given you a good whipping—then I guess you'd remember it," said Ella.

"Ella, Ella, is that the right spirit?" mildly inquired her aunt.

"Well, I don't see why father need blame me, so," said Ralph ; "I did n't know what mischief George was up to ; and besides, I don't want to be all the time making complaints about him."

"O, he does n't blame you," replied his aunt ; "he only wanted to put you on your guard, hereafter."

Thus Aunt Fanny labored to restore peace, in the little circle which had been set in commotion by the event of the evening previous. Her efforts were tolerably successful, and the good-humor of the children was apparently restored before the school hour arrived.

CHAPTER XII.

USEFULNESS.

THE next Saturday morning, at an early hour, Ella was stirring about, evidently making preparations for some important work. In reply to a question from her aunt, she said she was going to sweep and dust the parlor.

"No, dear," said Miss Lee, "you may leave that job for me—I will attend to it after breakfast."

"But why can't I do it, aunt? I'll be more careful, this time," said Ella.

"No, I think you had better not undertake it—you're hardly old enough, yet, to do such work," replied her aunt.

"But I *want* to do it," said Ella, thinking that she might yet gain her aunt's consent.

"I mean what I say, Ella," rejoined Miss Lee; "I intend to sweep the parlor myself, this morning."

"Yes, *please* to let me do it," persisted Ella, assuming a coaxing tone.

Her aunt made no further reply, but gave her a look that silenced her at once. She was a woman who could not endure to be teased. With her, no never meant yes. Ella knew this, and it was not often that she ventured to come in contact with this peculiarity in her aunt's temper.

After all, Ella was not really sorry to get rid of the care of the parlor, although she was not exactly reconciled to her aunt's motive in releasing her from the responsibility. She felt that she had not got an honorable discharge—that was all that troubled her. Her housekeeping zeal began to cool, a few days after her mother went off, and she did not render half so much assistance to her aunt, now, as she did at first. Even the work that she did perform, was seldom thoroughly done; and, unknown to her, her aunt was often obliged to do things over after her.

Several days after the above occurrence, Mary, the Irish girl, was suddenly seized with illness. She was so seriously affected, that Miss Lee insisted upon her giving up work, and taking to her bed. She reluctant-

ly yielded, and of course, the whole burden of household duties now came upon Aunt Fanny, in addition to the care of the patient. Ella seemed anxious to help her aunt, in this extremity, and proposed to stay away from school for this purpose, until Mary should get better ; but the term would close in about a fortnight, and Aunt Fanny was not willing that her attendance should be interrupted at such a time. She agreed, however, to let Ella assist her, as much as she pleased, out of school hours.

The next morning, Mary being no better, Ella arose early, and assisted in getting breakfast. She made herself quite useful, in various ways ; and but for one unfortunate mishap, that annoyed her very much, every thing went on as well as if Mary had been there. Her aunt was frying some eggs, and, having occasion to leave the kitchen a minute, she asked Ella to watch them. The trust was of course accepted, but, in her anxiety to be useful, it occurred to her that she might do something more than watch them. Besides, Ralph and George were watching *her*, and it was a good chance to let them see what she could do. One of the eggs needed turning—or at least, she persuaded herself

that it did. She had frequently admired the artistic manner in which Mary performed this operation, and she had witnessed the feat too often, not to know how to do it herself. So, taking a knife, she ran it under the egg that was to be turned, and having loosed its hold, gave it a careless toss, in imitation of Mary. But alas for her calculations! instead of coming down into the frying-pan, the unruly thing fell plump upon the top of the range, so near the edge, that the soft, uncooked mass trickled down to the hearth, leaving its yellow mark all the way. There was an explosion of laughter from the boys, in which their aunt heartily joined, when she returned to the kitchen. Ella, herself, could not help laughing at the accident, mortifying as it was to her vanity.

"Never mind, Ella," said her aunt, "wiser folks than you have made as great blunders as that. The Emperor Napoleon once undertook to make an omelet before his wife; but in turning it, he tossed it upon the floor, just as you did. If the boys laugh at you, you can tell them that you succeeded as well as Napoleon did."

Ella did not try to turn any more eggs, that morning, and she inwardly resolved that the next time she

undertook any unusual achievement in that line, it should not be in the presence of Ralph and George. After breakfast, while wiping the dishes, as her aunt washed them, Ella inquired—

“What do you think of me, aunt—do you suppose I shall ever make a good housekeeper?”

“That is a rather blunt question,” said her aunt, “and I hardly know how to answer it. Do you wish me to tell you just what I think, or are you merely fishing for a compliment?”

“Oh no, I don’t want a compliment—tell me exactly what you think,” replied Ella.

“Well,” said her aunt, “sometimes I have thought you bid fair to make a good housekeeper; and at other times I have had serious doubts about it.”

“I guess you had some doubts, when you found how I turned the egg, this morning,” said Ella, with a laugh.

“No, I never think any thing of such a trifling blunder as that, in a new beginner,” replied her aunt.

“What did you mean, then?” inquired Ella, who supposed that her egg feat was the poorest specimen of housekeeping talent she had ever exhibited before her aunt.

"I have seen several things that did not look very promising," replied her aunt; "but I think it very likely you will outgrow them—so I shall not give you up at present. I know of no reason why you should n't make a good housekeeper, if you try."

"But don't I try?" inquired Ella.

"Sometimes you do, but not always," replied her aunt. "You take hold very well, just now; but before Mary was taken sick, I began to think you were not very fond of housework."

"Well, you would n't let me sweep the parlor," said Ella; "and you never tell me to do any thing, and if I offer my services, you hardly ever accept them. So what can I do?"

"You know why I did n't want you to sweep the parlor," replied her aunt; "and as to your offering your services, I know you do that sometimes, but the difficulty is, you don't offer to do the right things. For instance, the day Mary began to complain of being unwell, you wanted to help do up the muslins; but as you never had done such work, I knew you would not be able to help us any, and so I declined your services. But if you had offered to iron some of the plain things,

which you could have done very well, I should have been glad, for it would have been quite a relief to Mary, with her sick headache."

"But why did n't you *ask* me to do it, aunt? I would have helped you iron, if I had only known you wanted me to," said Ella.

"That is n't my way," replied her aunt. "When people wish to help me, I like to have them volunteer. It would n't be very pleasant for me to ask you every few minutes to do this, and that, and the other. You can see what is to be done; and if you don't offer your services, I conclude that you don't want to help do the work. That's the reason I seldom ask you to do any thing; for I can assure you that I want no unwilling assistance, from any body."

This was a new view of the case to Ella; but though she had never thought much about it, she at once recognized a true portraiture in this description of herself.

"Well, I suppose it's so," she said; "but *mother* never charged me with being lazy."

"I don't say you are lazy, Ella," quickly responded her aunt. "I think you are quite industrious, at times.

But I have noticed that you like fancy work better than any thing that is merely plain and useful. This is often the case with girls of your age ; but if they wish to make themselves useful, they should try to conquer this preference. You must n't blame me for speaking so plain, for you asked me to tell you just what I thought of you."

"I don't blame you—I'm glad you told me," said Ella ; but her tone and look did not indicate that she was *very* grateful for her aunt's plain-dealing.

"But I have n't told you all, yet," added her aunt. "I have noticed another fault of yours, and that is, you are rather apt to slight your work. My motto is, if a thing is worth doing at all, it is worth doing well."

"Mother has often talked to me about that," said Ella. "I suppose the trouble with me, is, I always hurry so, when I'm doing any thing. I wish I could break myself of it."

"That may be done much easier now, than it can be half a dozen years hence," added her aunt.

"Well, I'll try," said Ella. "I believe I must make a new resolution, and put it with my others. I've kept them pretty well, don't you think I have?"

"Yes, so far as I can judge, I think you have," replied her aunt. "And now I hope you will try to turn over another new leaf, and see if you can't improve in this respect, before your mother returns. But while you are doing this, you must not forget your other resolutions. Do you suppose you can keep so many things in your mind, at one time?"

"I think I can," she replied.

"It will help you very much, to know precisely what you are to aim at," added her aunt. "When I get through my work, I will write down a few rules for you, in as few words as possible, so that you can commit them to memory."

Ella had now finished wiping the dishes; and there being nothing more that she could do, she soon after started for school. When she came home, at noon, her aunt handed her a small piece of paper, containing the following rules.

"HOW TO MAKE MYSELF USEFUL.

"1. I must be willing to do plain, common, and even disagreeable work.

"2. I must not wait to be asked.

"3. I must do it cheerfully.

"4. I must do it promptly, and finish one thing before I begin another.

"5. I must take time and care to do it well.

"6. When it is done, I must not brag about it, or expect to be paid for it; for virtue is its own reward."

Mary was much better, the next day, and was able to resume her place in the kitchen, although she still needed some assistance from Miss Lee, which was cheerfully rendered. Ella, too, was unusually "handy," and it was evident that the conversation with her aunt had not been forgotten. The boys still joked her occasionally about her "ill turn," as Ralph called it; but she bore their bantering good-naturedly, and made herself as useful as she could.

The children had been talking, for a week or two, about having a small party, and the consent of their father and aunt had been sought, but had not, as yet, been positively granted. They were permitted occasionally to invite fifteen or twenty of their intimate associates to their home, and spend an evening in a social manner. As their young friends were about to be scattered, by the return of the long summer vacation, they thought it would be pleasant to have a little

gathering of them, before the dispersion took place. It seemed to them that they had an especial claim to this favor, since their father had given them to understand that they were to spend their own vacation at home. But there were two things against them—the heat of the season, and their mother's absence. Mr. Preston opposed the project, chiefly on these grounds; but finally he agreed to let the children have a party, provided their aunt thought best. It was just at this time that Mary was taken sick, and for a day or two, the young folks thought their case looked rather doubtful; but as she grew better, their hopes revived, and they renewed their petitions and arguments with increased zeal. Their importunity prevailed with their kind-hearted aunt, and the day was set for the party.

The necessary preparations for the party of course made some extra work, but Ella rendered all the assistance in her power, and no one complained of the burden. She did not wait to be told what to do, and she was surprised to find how many ways there were in which she could make herself useful, when she was really desirous to render assistance. There was a de-

cided improvement, too, in the manner in which her work was done. It required much less undoing and doing over than usual. Her aunt noticed these hopeful indications with pleasure, and her only fear was, that they might not prove permanent. She thought they might be owing as much to Ella's excitement about the party, as to any influence exerted by the rules she gave her. She said nothing about it, however, but waited for time to show how this was.

A few days after Ella took this new start in her housekeeping experience, she tried to find out what her aunt thought of her doings.

"Aunt," she said, "you know one of my rules is, that 'I must n't brag;' but I just want to ask you if I have n't done my work better, since you talked to me, than I did before?"

"Yes, very much better," replied her aunt; "and you have done more work, too. Now you have found the right way, I hope you will persevere in it."

"I mean to," replied Ella. "I've learned your rules, and I don't believe I shall ever forget them."

"Then you must see that your broom does n't grow old," said her aunt.

Ella seemed perplexed by this enigmatical injunction ;
but her aunt explained her meaning by repeating the
familiar maxim,

“A new broom sweeps clean.”

CHAPTER XIII.

THE PARTY.

THE evening appointed for the children's party at length arrived. It came as fast as it could, although, to the impatient young folks particularly interested in the event it ushered in, this did not seem to be the case. At an early hour, after tea, the guests began to assemble, and their merry voices were soon resounding through the house. When they had all arrived, the company consisted of about twenty boys and girls, varying in age from eight to fourteen or fifteen years. Most of them lived in the neighborhood, and were intimately acquainted with each other. The Preston children, at first, designed to have a larger company, but their aunt persuaded them that they would have a pleasanter time, if they restricted their invitations to a few of their favorite associates. They were wise in yielding this point: for there is a great difference be-

tween a snug, sociable party of one's particular friends, and a great jam of mere acquaintances.

The issuing of the invitations had been a matter of considerable moment to the children. Acting in part from the advice of their aunt, they adopted a plan which they had never tried before. It was agreed that each should write upon a piece of paper the names of eight candidates for the party ; and all of these twenty-four candidates were to be invited to attend, except such as were objected to by more than one of the children. Any deficiencies in the list, were to be supplied by a second marking. Upon the first nomination, it was found that eight names were upon more than one paper, consequently, there was a deficiency in the number. Ella objected to one name on Ralph's list—the name of Joseph Blakely ; but as George did not side with her, the hero of the rag-baby was suffered to retain his place. On a second marking, the vacancies were filled, and the successful candidates were in due time informed of their election, by means of neatly written notes, announcing that Miss Ella and Masters Ralph and George Treston would receive their friends, on such an evening.

The little party was by no means a stupid one. The young guests did not embarrass each other with formalities, but "made themselves at home" as only such guests can. Their merry voices and sprightly footsteps resounded through the house, and attracted the notice of the passers-by upon the street. A variety of games and amusements were resorted to, and were entered into with much spirit. Sometimes all the company were engaged in one play. At other times, they would scatter into a number of little groups, each diverting itself in its own way. Two or three of the more sedate ones might be seen in a corner of the room, absorbed in the examination of some curious object or illustrated book. In another corner, perhaps, a mischievous boy is about to play off a joke upon an unsuspecting little fellow, who is quietly watching the progress of a game in which he has become interested. Another is relating a laughable story, or propounding a puzzling charade, to a knot of listeners; and another, still, is very complacently "paying a forfeit" which she has just incurred—said forfeit being, first to cry, then to laugh, and lastly to whistle.

One of the plays that caused much sport, was called

"*Hunt the Whistle.*" The players seated themselves on the floor, in a circle. A little boy, who had never witnessed the game, was introduced into the center of the ring, to act as hunter. He was told to hide his face in the lap of another boy, while the whistle was concealed. A string, with a pin bent into a hook at the end of it, had been previously attached to the whistle; and while the hunter hid his face, one of the players hooked the whistle to the back of his jacket, and blew it. The hunter turned about, at the signal, when the whistle was quickly caught up and blown by some one on the opposite side of the circle. This was continued for several minutes, the whistle sounding continually from opposite directions, to the great perplexity of the hunter. He began to suspect there was more than one whistle in the circle, but, on turning about more suddenly than usual, he discovered the secret, and thus the play ended.

Among the boys present, no one contributed more to the enjoyment of the company than Joe Blakely and Ella now felt glad that she was in a minority, when she cast her vote against him. At first, she was rather shy of him; but her reserve soon wore off, and before

the evening was half spent, she was ready to admit that she had not done justice to Joe, in the opinion she had formed of him. He was foremost in all the games, and introduced one or two new ones, with which the rest of the company were unacquainted. One of these was called "The New Scholar," and was played as follows :

A young miss, who was selected to take the part of the new scholar, was requested to write the following things upon a piece of paper:—1. A female name. 2. The name of a place. 3. Any number not exceeding twenty. 4. A man's trade or profession. 5. A sum of money. 6. A woman's trade or profession. 7. Name of a color. 8. Either yes or no. 9. A number not exceeding twenty. 10. Yes or no. 11. The names of two branches of study. 12. A woman's trade or profession. 13. The name of some eminent character. 14. Yes or no. 15. Name of a bad habit. 16. An article of food. 17. An article of drink. 18. A number not exceeding twenty-four. 19. An article of apparel. 20. Write yes.

When this list was filled out, the children "came to order," and seated themselves around the room, Joe,

who was to play the part of schoolmaster, taking a seat in the middle of the floor. Ella, who had been deputed to introduce the new pupil, now came in from the entry, with her protege, and the following dialogue followed :

Ella. "Master, here's a young lady that wants to join our school."

Master. (Reading from his list of questions.) "What is your name?"

New Scholar. (Reading from her list of answers.) "Dorothy Matilda Lovelace."

M. "Where did you come from?"

N. S. "Pumpkinville."

M. "How old are you?"

N. S. "Four."

M. "What is your father's business?"

N. S. "Woodsawyer."

M. "How much is he worth?"

N. S. "One million dollars."

M. "What is your mother's business?"

N. S. "Washerwoman."

M. "What is her complexion?"

N. S. "Green."

M. "Are you unmanageable at home?"

N. S. "Yes."

M. "How many brothers and sisters have you?"

N. S. "Nineteen."

M. "Are you fond of study?"

N. S. "No."

M. "What branches are you most proficient in?"

N. S. "Greek and Botany,"

M. "What profession or position in life do you aspire to?"

N. S. "Mantua-maker."

M. "Whom do you expect to rival in eminence?"

N. S. "The Queen of Sheba."

M. "Are you not a little weak in the upper story?"

N. S. "Yes."

M. "What do you consider your greatest fault?"

N. S. "Chewing tobacco."

M. "What is your favorite food?"

N. S. "Clams."

M. "What is your favorite drink?"

N. S. "Cider."

M. "How many hours do you sleep, out of the twenty-four?"

N. S. "Fifteen."

M. "What can you pledge for the payment of your tuition?"

N. S. "My shoes."

M. "Do you pledge yourself to obey the rules of the school, on penalty of losing your ears?"

N. S. "Yes."

M. "Well, you will pass. You may begin your lessons by saying 'Quizzical quiz, kiss me quick' nine times as fast as you can, without making any mistake."

It is hardly necessary to add, that the new scholar's first lesson was a failure.

"How do you like it?" was another play that afforded the children much amusement, while at the same time it served to sharpen their wits. It was played as follows. One of the party left the room, until the company had selected a word, which was to form the puzzle. It is necessary that this word should have two or more distinct meanings, as *flower*, (or *flour*,) *bank*, *post*, *key*, *lock*, &c. When the word has been decided upon, the person who went out may be recalled, and it is his duty to ascertain what word has been selected by the answers given to the three following questions: First, he must

ask each person in succession, "How do you like it?" If he is not then able to guess the word, he must go around again, asking each, "When do you like it?"—and if he does not then find out the word, he must go around the third time, asking, "Where will you put it?" And, finally, if unable to guess the word at the third round, he is to be crowned with a dunce-cap, and required to recommence his questions, proceeding as before. When he hits upon the right word, the person whose answer led him to conjecture it, must take his place, and leave the room while another word is chosen.

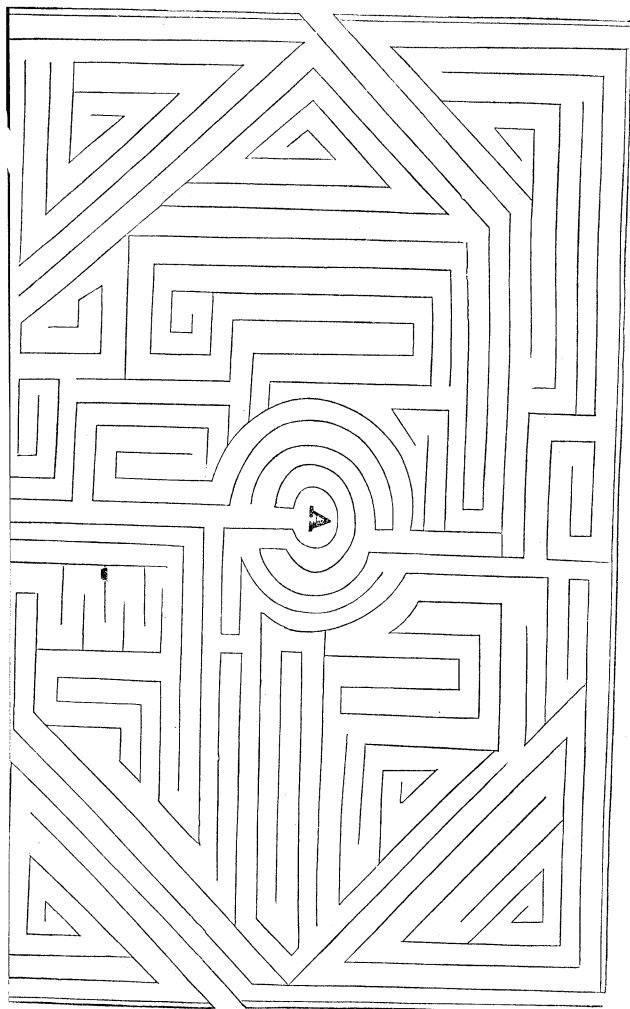
Willie Davenport, or Whistler, as he was familiarly called, happened to be the one selected to guess the word. When he came into the room, and put the inquiry, "How do you like it?" to one and another, he received a great variety of answers. Some liked it "gentle;" some "soft and easy;" some "sweet and balmy;" some "clear and cold;" some "warm and mild;" some "active and nimble;" some "gurgling;" and some "very elastic." He kept repeating these words to himself, as he went from one to another; but it was not until he came to the word "elastic," that he hit upon the solution of the puzzle.

"You may take my place, Mr. Elastic," he said; "*spring* is the word, and you gave me the clew to it."

Sometimes, however, the guesser was obliged to go round the circle with his questions two or three times before he could hit upon the right word; and in one instance, the "dunce-cap" itself was brought into service, and added amazingly to the amusement of the game.

While these general games were going on, some of the party amused themselves in a more quiet way. An ingenious puzzle called a "Greek Labyrinth," which one of the girls had brought, attracted considerable attention. It was printed upon a sheet of paper, and a copy of it is given on the opposite page. The puzzle consists in getting from the outside to the center, A, without crossing any of the lines. There is a way through the maze, but in trying to find it, one "brings up against nothing," every little while, or else suddenly finds himself just where he started from. It is very much like trying to find one's way about the crooked streets of Boston, for the first time.

During the evening, somebody started a game of



“Geographical Conundrums,” which excited no little interest, for a time. They were impromptu,—that is, made off-hand, on the spur of the moment,—and several of the young folks took part in them. The first one propounded, was, “Who are the most zealous people in the world?” After a little hesitation, the answer was given, “The New Zeal-landers.” “Who are the shortest people?” somebody else inquired; and the answer was found to be, “The Span-ish.” “Where would you send an angry man?” inquired another. “To Ire-land,” was the reply. “Where would you send a boy who is all the time saying, ‘I can’t’?” was eagerly propounded by a little fellow, who it was plain did not manufacture conundrums every day. No one being equal to the riddle, he gave the answer, “To Can-ada.” But about the best one got off, was by Ella. Observing that one of the smallest girls present showed signs of sleepiness,—it was just before the party broke up,—she asked her if she knew where the best place was for her. Without waiting for a reply, Ella took the little girl into her lap, saying, “Here it is—in Lap-land!” The sleepy little guest, who prided herself that she had out-grown “Lap-land” at least twelve months before, did

not like the point of the joke very well, but she was wide-awake the rest of the evening.

In the course of the evening, some light refreshments were offered to the guests, such as cherries, pine-apples, nuts, ice-cream, lemonade, etc. It was about eleven o'clock, when the party broke up; and it was nearly midnight before the Preston children got calmed down sufficiently to go to bed. Their father had retired, long before this time; but their aunt and Mary had set up, to see the party out. At length the last lamp was blown out, and silence reigned once more through the house.

But silence did not reign long. All the family had just sunk into a profound sleep, when a cry, half sob and half whine, came from the boys' room. It grew louder and louder, and soon reached the watchful ear of Aunt Fanny. On going to the chamber whence the noise proceeded, she found that George was suffering severely from pain, while Ralph, half asleep, was trying to pacify him. But the sick boy pressed his hands upon his stomach, and refused to be comforted, but rather cried the louder, the more he was sympathized with. His aunt soon discovered the cause of his trouble,

and proceeded to render such relief as the exigency required. It took some time, however, to heat water, and prepare medicine; and the night had well advanced into the "small hours," before George was soothed to sleep.

I hardly dare tell you what a quantity of ice-cream, pine-apple, cherries, etc., George had eaten, during the evening. He had indulged his appetite to the full, having stolen away for this purpose to the room where the refreshments were carried, after they had been passed round to the company; for he was ashamed to gorge himself in this way before his young friends. But he paid dearly for his selfish and gluttonous indulgence, before morning,—for this was the cause of his sickness in the night, and of the feverish headache which followed, confining him in the house the whole of the next day

CHAPTER XIV.

TEMPER.

GEORGE was unusually cross, the day after the party.

The excitement of the evening, his subsequent sickness and loss of sleep, and the headache with which he awoke in the morning, all served to make him peevish and unhappy. Soon after he arose, Ralph unintentionally provoked his anger, by pleasantly joking him about the cause of his sickness in the night. His experience in cramming may have taught him a wholesome lesson, but he did not like to have it thrown in his face quite so early in the morning. He resented it so sharply, that when Ralph, who went down stairs before him, was asked how he was, he replied,

"I guess he is n't very sick, but he's as cross as bear."

"He does look rather touchy," said Ella, thoughtlessly, as George entered the room, a few moments after.

"I wish you'd mind your own business, and let me alone," quickly replied the sick boy, in a not very bland tone.

Ella was about to retort, but a look from her aunt arrested the words upon her lips, and the matter was dropped. It was very foolish in Ella to make the remark she did to George, as she knew that he was unwell and irritable; but she did not intend to do any harm, and tried to excuse herself on the plea, that "she did n't think,"—a common but miserable apology for doing evil.

There was a large amount of house-cleaning to be done, that morning, for parties make dirt, especially when composed of children. Ella had a spare hour before school-time, and, having obtained her aunt's consent, she prepared to take care of the sitting-room, as her share of the extra work. When she was ready to commence operations, she found that George was in the room, stretched at full length upon the sofa. She informed him what she was about to do, and requested him to go somewhere else. But he refused to stir.

"Sweep away," he said; "I don't care for the dust."

"But you will get all covered with dust," said Ella;

"and you 'll breathe it into your lungs, too, and that's bad. Besides, you are in my way."

"Then you may go somewhere else and sweep—there's no need of your bothering me, now," replied George.

"But this is all the room I'm going to sweep—aun is going to do the others," said Ella. "Come, please don't hinder me, for I shan't get done before school-time, if you do."

George paid no attention to this appeal. Ella, smothering the angry feelings she felt tugging at her heart, waited calmly a minute; and then, seeing that her brother showed no signs of moving, she went up stairs and made her bed. When she came back, George occupied the same place, and again refused to leave the room, although she made her request in a very civil way. For a moment or two she was at a loss how to proceed. She felt strongly inclined to go ahead with the sweeping, and see if she could not drive the intruder out, in a cloud of dust. But this would look like revenge, or ugliness, and she felt very placid, just at that moment,—to her credit be it spoken,—and was determined that she would not fly

into a passion. She finally referred the matter to her aunt, who, satisfying herself that Ella felt very pleasantly about it, advised her to sweep the room, and pay no attention to George.

Ella of course followed her aunt's advice. The broom was used vigorously, the dust flew, and the furniture, including the sofa itself, was pulled about in admirable confusion. Still the obstinate boy maintained his position, feigning sleep! Half an hour after, when Ella returned to dust the room, he was in the same spot. The dust had settled thickly upon him, but he did not care for that, since he had carried his point. Ella dusted all around him, as well as she could, and, with a sly twinkle in her eye, finished off by dusting George himself, which operation he bore without moving a muscle.

During all this time, the foolish boy had been sacrificing his comfort to his obstinacy. As soon as Ella had finished her work, and gone off, he jumped up from his tiresome position, and left the room, from which he was now glad enough to escape.

On her way to school, that morning, Ella fell in with a girl whom she would gladly have avoided, just at that

time ; for it was an acquaintance whom she did *not* invite to the party. Her name was Elizabeth Story. She was of about Ella's age, and they both attended the same school. Elizabeth was not much of a favorite with the girls. She was one of those people who are "all things to all men," taking the phrase in its bad signification ; for, as St. Paul originally used the words, they imply a noble spirit of self-sacrifice. But Elizabeth Story sacrificed others, not herself. She had a different face for every person she met. She was all smiles in your presence, but how she would talk, when your back was turned ! If you were foolish enough to drop a thoughtless or unkind word about an absent person, in her hearing, it would surely return to you again, after many days, like bread cast upon the waters.

"You had a party up to your house, last night, did n't you ?" inquired Elizabeth, as they met.

"Yes, my brothers and I had a little company," replied Ella.

"Who was there ?" inquired Elizabeth.

"O, we only had a few of our most intimate friends—about twenty or so," replied Ella, and she named over some who were present.

"Was Abby Loring invited?" continued Elizabeth.

"No," was Ella's reply.

"I thought she was n't," said Elizabeth, in a tone that at once excited the curiosity of Ella.

"Why, what made you think so?" she inquired.

"Oh, I heard her say something, yesterday, that made me think she did n't get an invitation," replied Elizabeth.

"But what was it? Won't you tell me?" inquired Ella.

"No, I think not—you won't like it, if I do," replied Elizabeth, in her most tantalizing manner.

But you *must* tell me," added Ella; "you've excited my curiosity, and now you must gratify it."

"Won't you blame me, if I tell you?" inquired the little mischief-maker.

"No, I won't, positively," replied Ella,—a promise, by the way, which she had better not make.

"Well," continued Elizabeth, "the girls were talking about your party, and Abby Loring spoke up, and said you need n't hold up your head so high, for your father used to draw a hand-cart once for a living."

"The impudent ——;" but the bitter word that

sprung to Ella's lips was suppressed, and the sentence left unfinished. Forgetting the promise so foolishly made, a moment before, she felt offended with Elizabeth, for repeating the remark, and escaped from her company, as soon as she could decently do so.

That unkind and insulting remark haunted Ella, all the forenoon. She did not know but it was true that her father was once a hand-cartman, but this was the first she had ever heard of it. If it was true, however, she very soon came to the sensible conclusion that the fact was no disgrace, either to her father or to herself. But the mean, jealous and sneering spirit that dictated such a remark, in the presence of her school-mates—that was what barbed the shaft with venom that could not be easily extracted. One and another of her young friends spoke in glowing words, of the good time they had enjoyed with her, the previous evening; but even this could not soothe her troubled spirit, or make her forget Abby's spiteful and provoking remark.

It was Wednesday, and but one session of the school was held. In the afternoon, Ella mentioned to her aunt the circumstance that had so deeply moved her feelings. One reason for doing this, was, to satisfy her-

self whether Abby Loring's assertion was true,—for she supposed that her aunt could tell her. But she had another and better motive, which was, to ask her aunt's opinion as to how such girls as Abby and Elizabeth should be treated.

"I hope you have n't let such a trifling thing as that trouble you," said Aunt Fanny, after Ella had told her story.

"But how could I help it?" inquired Ella. "Just think how ugly it was in Abby, to speak so; and then how mean it was in Elizabeth to come and tell me about it."

"You asked Elizabeth to tell you what the other girl said, did you not?" inquired her aunt.

"I did, after she had raised my curiosity," said Ella; "but why need she have said any thing about it?"

"And you say that Elizabeth is a tattler, who is always making trouble between the girls?" continued Aunt Fanny.

"Yes, ma'am," replied Ella.

"Well," resumed her aunt, "it appears to me you have only brought a just retribution upon your head; for if you keep company with tattlers, and countenance them in their bad habits, it is no more than fair that

you should suffer for it. It takes two to make a tattler—one to talk, and one to listen.”

“But, aunt, if you knew somebody had been talking hard about you, would n’t you find out what they said, if you could ?” inquired Ella.

“I don’t know what I *might* do, in an imaginary case,” replied her aunt, “but I know very well what I *ought* to do. For instance, if I had been in your place, when the girl began to hint about what Abby said, I ought to have reasoned with myself, in this way : ‘This girl is a deceitful, two-faced tattler—a snake in the grass—and I won’t encourage her in her ways. I’ll just hint to her, as plain as I can, that if she has heard any thing bad about me, she had better keep it to herself.’ If you had tried this plan, Ella, I think it would have saved your feelings some hard rubs.”

“I suppose it would, but I did n’t think of it,” replied Ella.

“But after all,” continued her aunt, “suppose you father was once a hand-cartman, who cares for that ? It’s as honest a business as any other, and as respectable, for aught that I know. No sensible person would think a whit the less of him, on that account. On the other

hand, it is very much to a man's credit, if he raises himself from a poor and humble condition, to a position of greater responsibility and usefulness."

"But, aunt, is it true that father used to drag a hand cart for a living?" inquired Ella.

"No, I think it must be a mistake," replied her aunt. "I believe your father went into Mr. Wright's store when he was a small boy, and staid there until he became a man. When he was chore-boy, it is very likely that he sometimes used a wheel-barrow or hand-cart, and perhaps Abby's story arose from that. This is a better foundation than such remarks often have."

"Then I shall just tell Abby Loring that she has circulated false reports about my father," said Ella, with a determined air.

"No, I would not do that," replied her aunt. "If it were worth while to do any thing about the matter, I would advise you to first go to Abby, and find out just what she said. But it is such a trifling thing, that it seems to me you had better let it drop and be forgotten. I would not say any thing more about it."

Ella was slow to assent to this proposition; but she finally yielded, and promised to treat Abby as though

nothing had occurred to interrupt the friendly relations between them. On second thought, she was ready to admit that possibly Abby had been misrepresented. They had always been on good terms, and it was strange that she should speak so spitefully of Ella, merely because she received no invitation to her party.

The next morning, just before the bell rang for school to commence, Ella saw Abby standing in the yard, with a group of girls, and she approached them, and addressed a familiar remark to her supposed enemy. The effect was very different from what she anticipated. Turning her head aside, with a look of anger and scorn, Abby walked off, without replying to Ella's remark. This proceeding was noticed with surprise, by the other girls in the group, and they looked to Ella, for an explanation; but the poor child was too much overcome by her feelings to gratify their curiosity. They were soon after summoned into school by the bell, and Ella took her accustomed seat, in a frame of mind far from pleasant. She did not dare even to cast a glance toward Abby's desk, which was near her, but sat with her eyes fixed upon the book before her, absorbed in her own troubled thoughts.

So this was her reward for trying to forgive an injury; this was her recompense for doing right. The girl who had abused her, behind her back, had now insulted her, to her face, and in the presence of others. What use was there of trying to govern her temper, under such provocations? Could an angel from heaven do it? She doubted it. Such were Ella's thoughts. But gradually her feelings grew more calm, and her better nature resumed its sway. When the time came for recess, she was in her usual spirits, and raced and laughed with as much glee as any of her companions. She was careful, however, not to run in contact with the spiteful Abby.

But, although Ella soon got over her feelings of resentment toward Abby Loring, she still felt unpleasantly about the breach that had taken place between them. She concluded, however, not to trouble her aunt with any further reports of the case, and determined to settle the difficulty by her own wits, if possible, or, if this could not be done, she would try to suffer evil without retaliating. It was not long before she found an opportunity to speak with Abby alone. She asked

her, in a kind tone, why she refused to speak to her, in the morning.

"I choose not to talk with people that abuse me behind my back," replied Abby, in a tone that could not be misunderstood.

"Who has abused you behind your back?" inquired Ella.

"You have," was the blunt reply.

"I did n't know it," continued Ella; "but I suppose *you* never do such things, do you?"

"I never abused *you* behind your back, at any rate," replied Abby.

"You did n't tell some of the girls that my father used to be a hand-cartman, and that I had better not hold my head so high, did you?" inquired Ella, in a tone that seemed to say, "I've got you now, my dear."

"Your father a hand-cartman!" exclaimed Abby, in astonishment; "I never said such a thing in my life, nor heard of it, either. Who told you I said that?"

"Elizabeth Story told me," replied Ella. "She say you were put out because we did n't invite you to our party, and that was one of the remarks you made."

"Then Elizabeth Story told you a great fib," said

Abby. "There is n't a word of truth in it. I remember all about it, now. One of the girls mentioned your party, and Elizabeth said she supposed she was n't genteel enough to have an invitation. I said I did n't believe that would make any difference, for I felt almost certain that Jane Somers would be there, and her father was nothing more than a hand-cartman. That is just what I said—and to think that hateful girl should tell you such a story! I should n't wonder if she had told me a fib, too; what did you say, when she told you that?"

Ella hesitated, for an instant, how to answer this unexpected question; for to tell the exact truth, would be to confess that she had been a little indiscreet with her tongue. She did not hesitate long, however, but fully and faithfully related what transpired, on the occasion in question.

"Is that all?" inquired Abby, on hearing Ella's confession; "why, Liz Story told me that you said you could n't bear me, because I was so proud, and that you did n't invite me to your party, because none of the girls like me. I thought, from what she said, that you spoke real sneeringly of me. I was a fool to believe

her, but I did n't suppose she could tell such a downright lie."

Abby's conscience smote her, for the manner in which she had treated Ella, who, under supposed provocations almost identical with her own, had borne herself so differently. She apologized to her injured schoolmate, and they became good friends again, to the wonder of the young mischief-maker who had tried so hard to set them by the ears. Ella began to feel persuaded that it is wise to keep one's temper, even when there is every inducement to fly into a passion.

CHAPTER XV.

SUMMER INSECTS.

“**T**HERE, George, that is too bad—you’re a real cruel boy, to do so, don’t you think he is, aunt?”

The speaker was Ella. George, who had called forth the remark, had discovered a spider’s web, just outside of the window, and was amusing himself by catching flies, and offering them in sacrifice to the grim, big-bellied monster who was awaiting in his den for any luckless victim that might become entangled in his meshes. His aunt watched his operations for a moment, and then remarked,

“Yes, Ella, I call that a cruel amusement. Just imagine how terrified that poor fly must feel, when he finds that he can’t get away from that hideous spider. I suppose he feels very much as you would, George, if a great giant should take you up, and toss you into a den of wild beasts.”

"But would n't the spider eat flies, if I did n't catch them for him? I thought that was what spiders were made for," said George.

"It is true they have a natural appetite for flies, but that does not make it any the less cruel in you to amuse yourself in this way. Game-cocks have a natural inclination to fight, but cock-fighting is considered a cruel and barbarous amusement. If I were you, I would let the spiders catch and kill their own prey."

"I should think you'd be glad to have the flies put out of the way," continued George; "I heard you complaining of them, yesterday. I don't see what flies are made for, nor spiders, either—I hate them both. And there are mosquitoes, too—what torments they are! I got two or three mosquito bites, last night, and they itch like every thing, now. I wish there wasn't a mosquito in the world. I should like to know what good they do."

"I suppose we have a right to destroy such creatures, when they annoy us," said his aunt; "but that is very different from torturing them for sport, as you were just now doing with the flies. We ought to do all we can

to relieve suffering, not to increase it. I have known boys to pull insects to pieces, and to put them to a slow death, just to see them struggle ; but they must have been either very hard-hearted, or very thoughtless, to do so. Such boys are apt to make bad men. Did you ever hear of Benedict Arnold ?”

“Arnold the traitor ? Yes, ma’am, I’ve read about him,” replied George.

“When he was a boy,” continued Aunt Fanny, “he was very cruel to animals. He used to rob birds’ nests, and kill the young birds, for the sake of seeing how the old ones would act, when they found their homes laid waste, and their little ones slaughtered. This cruel disposition led him to take delight in annoying his playmates, too. One of his tricks was to scatter bits of broken glass in their path, so that they might cut their feet, when they passed along. A boy who likes to torture animals, is generally cruel toward his young associates, and is pretty sure to make a bad man. Nero, the great tyrant of Rome, is another illustration of this. When he was a little boy, he used to amuse himself with torturing flies, very much as you were doing, just now. If I were a boy, it seems to me I should not

like to follow such examples as these. I would rather try to amuse myself by studying the curious habits and natures of these little insects."

"Why," said George, "I don't see any thing very curious about flies and spiders."

"Do you know how the fly walks on the ceiling, with his feet upward?" inquired his aunt.

"No, ma'am, I never thought of that," replied George.

"His feet are provided with a glutinous substance, which makes them stick to the wall, when he walks with his back downward," replied his aunt. "Now can you tell me how he eats?"

"He has a trunk, something like an elephant's, and he sucks up his victuals through that," replied George.

"Yes, you are right," continued his aunt; "but suppose he wants to feast on a lump of sugar, how do you suppose he could manage a solid substance like that, without any teeth to chew it with?"

"I don't know," said George.

"He passes some liquid down his trunk, and dissolves the sugar, and then eats it," said Aunt Fanny.

"Our teacher showed us some objects through a

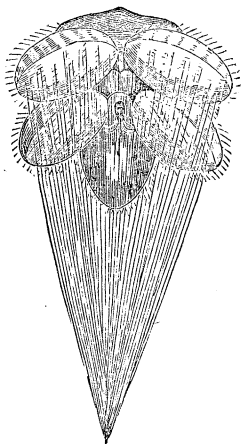
microscope, a few days ago," said Ella, "and among them was a fly's wing. It was very curious—I'm sure nobody would ever suppose there could be so much work and beauty in such a common thing."

"Most of the insect* tribes are found to be very beautiful, when put under the microscope," resumed her aunt. "George would be compelled to admit that even spiders are wonderfully and beautifully made, if he should examine them through a good magnifying-glass. Their eyes are very brilliant, and their spinning apparatus is quite curious. Every spider has several little bags, filled with a substance resembling glue. These bags are pierced by a multitude of very fine holes. When the spider wishes to spin a web, he draws out a thread from his glue-bags, through each of these holes, and they all unite and form a single strand; so that a spider's thread, fine as it is, is really composed of four or five thousand separate threads. If it was not so common a sight, we

* This word is used in this chapter in its loose and popular sense. Strictly speaking, only those creatures are insects which have their bodies divided into three distinct parts and are furnished with six legs. Spiders, worms, etc., are not properly included in the term, although it is often applied to them.

should regard a spider's web as a very wonderful thing."

"After all," said Ella, "I can't imagine how people can see any thing beautiful about a spider. They're hateful things—I always was afraid of them, and always shall be. A big, ugly one lowered himself down from the ceiling right on to my hand, one day this summer. Oh, how I did scream!"



"Did he hurt you very much?" inquired her aunt.

"Why, no, he did n't hurt me at all," replied Ella; "but I can't bear the idea of having a spider near me."

"Did you ever know any one to be harmed by a spider?" continued Aunt Fanny.

"I've heard of their stinging people, and poisoning them," said Ella.

"The spiders we have in this country," resumed her aunt, "very seldom if ever injure any one. Their poison will kill flies, but it is too weak to affect us; and I believe they do not often try their fangs on human flesh."

I know they are not very amiable-looking creatures; and I should not think of making pets of them, as some people have done; but after all, I think it looks rather foolish for a girl to run or scream, whenever she sees a spider near her. I am apt to suspect that there is a little affectation about it."

"Oh, aunt," exclaimed Ella, "it is n't affectation that makes me shudder when I see a spider; I'm afraid of them—I can't bear to have them near me."

"Then I would try to conquer the feeling of dislike," replied her aunt, "since it is founded on a mere prejudice. It is foolish and wrong to yield to such feelings, when we know better."

In the evening, after the children had come in from play, and were gathered in the sitting-room with their aunt, as was their wont, for a brief twilight chat, the good-humor of the company was somewhat disturbed by the entry of sundry little visitors, whose bold and saucy buzz gave warning of coming troubles. Ella's patience was the first to become exhausted.

"Oh, dear!" she exclaimed, petulantly, "where did all these musquitoes come from? I don't believe there ever were so many in Boston before. I can't take any

comfort at all after dark. First they 're one side of me, and then another, and then they 're around my feet, and then they 're behind. What a plague they are! I thought every thing was made for good, but I can't see what good mosquitoes do."

"I've been reading quite an interesting account of the mosquito, this afternoon," said her aunt. "Our talk about insects, this morning, set me to thinking of them, and I have learned some curious facts in regard to them. Have you any idea where they come from?"

"They come from the country, don't they?" suggested Ella, rather timidly.

"No they don't, they come out of the water, don't they, Aunt Fanny?" said Ralph, with considerable assurance.

"Yes, Ralph is right," replied his aunt. "The mosquito lays her eggs wherever she happens to find stagnant water. In the country, it is usually in swamps, pools, ditches, and ponds; in the city, she can generally find water standing in troughs, cisterns, hogsheads, etc. She fastens her eggs together very carefully, in a boat-shaped form, and leaves them to float upon the water; for if they should sink, they would be destroyed. In a

few days, the eggs are hatched, when a little lid opens in the under end of each egg, and down tumbles the larva, as the insect is now called, into the water. You have seen these little creatures darting through stagnant water, hundreds of times."

"What," interrupted Ralph, "do you mean those things in rain-water hogsheads, that the boys call wiggle-tails?"

"Yes," said his aunt, "I presume your 'wiggle-tails,' or wriggletails, as I should call them, are the larva of the mosquito. Some people call them jerkers. They wriggle about in a very lively way; and sometimes you will find them resting at the surface, with head down and tail up."

"Oh, yes," said Ralph, "I've noticed that, myself; what do they do so for?"

"That is the way they breathe," replied his aunt. "Their respiratory organ is near the tail. After a few days, they change their form, and pass into what is called the pupa or chrysalis state—the state the caterpillar assumes just before it becomes a butterfly. It soon experiences its last transformation; and using its cast-off skin as a raft, it floats upon the water until its wings are

ready for use, and then flies away, a full-blown mosquito. All these changes are accomplished in about four weeks, and several broods are raised in the course of one season."

"I suppose they all die, when cold weather comes," said Ella.

"Not all of them," replied her aunt. "Some are fortunate enough to hide themselves away in warm cellars, or comfortable crannies, where they stay all winter; and early in the spring they come forth, very thin, but with excellent appetites, and as lively as ever. And that reminds me that the mosquito is a very swift traveler. It has been estimated that when flying, its wings vibrate three thousand times in a minute. Just think of that—fifty times a second! Why, we can hardly conceive of it. It is believed that they sometimes follow and keep up with the railroad cars, when traveling at a rapid rate."

"I did n't know that there were so many curious things about mosquitoes," said Ella; "but after all, they're real torments, and I don't see what they were made for. Do you suppose they do any good, Aunt Fanny?"

"I believe God made nothing in vain," replied her aunt. "Insects confer many benefits upon us, which are seldom thought of. They are scavengers, and are continually carrying off corrupt animal and vegetable matter, that would poison the air, if suffered to remain. Then they themselves afford food for birds and other animals, and thus benefit us in another way. When we denounce the whole musquito tribe, for their blood-thirstiness, we are rather too sweeping in our complaints. It is supposed that not one musquito in a million ever tastes a particle of blood. The great mass of them live in forests and marshes, away from the habitations of man, and their food is water, and vegetable juices. It is probable that they help to keep the atmosphere pure and healthy, by carrying off large quantities of decomposing vegetable matter. So, as you see, the musquito is after all a much-abused animal."

"Well," said Ella, "if they would only take what blood they want, in a decent way, and not sting so, I would n't say a word. I don't see why they need poison us, after they have tried to eat us up alive."

"That is a disagreeable habit," added her aunt, "but they have a tolerably good excuse for it. Their poison

produces immediate irritation, and causes the blood to flow to the spot, and so they get a quick supply of food. The musquito knows she must n't stop long, and she hurries up her business, as fast as possible. Can you blame her for that?"

"Why, aunt, I really believe that you will convince us that the musquito is a very amiable little fellow," said Ella, laughing.

"There is another curious thing in regard to them," continued Aunt Fanny. "The females do all the stinging and blood-sucking. The males have no trunk or sting, and could not bite you, if they tried."

"There, El, that backs up what I said yesterday," exclaimed Ralph, with an air of satisfaction. "She is all the time saying that boys are a great deal more troublesome than girls, and I contend they are not," he continued, addressing his aunt. "I say children are something like musquitoes—it's the females that do the stinging."

"Why, Ralph Preston! you talk like a simpleton," exclaimed Ella, evidently excited. "You may compare yourself with a musquito, if you choose, but you need n't think I'm one."

Ralph was sensible that he had made a foolish speech, the instant it was uttered. He had put his sentiment into a much stronger form than he intended, but it was too late to recall it. His aunt thought that such a sweeping libel against her sex ought not to pass unnoticed.

"I do not see what this fact about mosquitoes has to do with your dispute," she said; "and if there were any parallel between you and them, Ella might argue that the male mosquito would be very glad to suck our blood, if he could. There is no virtue in his abstinence. I hold that neither boys nor girls need be very troublesome, if they try to behave well; and as to their stinging, why, I think one can wound as deep as the other. I am sorry Ralph has such a poor opinion of the female sex—I am afraid he forgot that his mother is a woman, and was once a little girl, like Ella."

"I did n't mean it," Ralph stammered, blushing to his temples.

"I supposed you did not," continued his aunt; "but if I were you, I would not allow myself to get in the habit of speaking in that way. It does not sound well. When you hear a man or boy running down the sex to

which his mother and sisters belong, you may feel pretty sure that there is something wrong about him. I hope George will remember that, too."

"George is asleep," said Ella.

"Then don't disturb him," replied her aunt; "he has layed very hard, this afternoon, and needs rest. I thought he was listening very intently to our talk about mosquitoes, but I am afraid he has not derived much benefit from it."

"I'll tell him all about it, to-morrow," said Ralph; "but there is one thing more I want to ask—do birds eat mosquitoes?"

"I think it very probable that some species of birds do, although perhaps they do not make these insects their principal article of food. But the dragon-fly, or devil's darning-needle, as the boys call it, destroys great multitudes of mosquitoes. During the hot days of summer, this elegant insect may be seen darting about in every direction, with astonishing swiftness, in the neighborhood of stagnant waters, where mosquitoes are plenty. The dragon-fly is a terrible scourge to the insects. It is on the wing nearly the whole day, and its appetite knows no bounds. A gentleman once caught.

one, and while holding it by the wings, he presented to it thirty-seven large flies and four long-legged spiders, in rapid succession, and the little glutton ate them all. It would probably have eaten as many more, had not its captor become tired of catching insects for it."

"I think it would be a good plan to tame one or two dragon-flies, and keep them about the house, to kill mosquitoes and flies," suggested Ralph.

"O, horrors!" exclaimed Ella, "I should rather have fifty mosquitoes than one of those big, ugly things flying about the house."

"I see you have n't conquered all your prejudices against insects, yet," said her aunt, smiling; "but never mind—I do not think Ralph's plan would work very well. The dragon-flies probably would not fancy your society, any more than you would their's. I do not see but that we shall have to be patient, and bear the assaults of the mosquitoes with as good grace as we can. Ralph, you had better wake your brother up, now, and get ready to go to bed—it is nearly half-past nine."

The mosquito discussion was laid on the table, and the children soon after adjourned to their sleeping-rooms.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE RAINY AFTERNOON

IT was Saturday. A severe rain-storm had set in early in the morning, and continued without cessation through the day. The children came home from school at noon, in no very pleasant humor with the weather; for sundry little plans of theirs, for the afternoon, had been unceremoniously demolished by the descending showers.

"Oh dear! I wish it would stop raining," exclaimed Ella, looking at the clouds for the tenth time, to see if there were any indications of a clearing up.

"I should much prefer to have it rain," said her aunt; "for we need it very much. The milkman told me yesterday that one good rainy day would be worth millions of dollars to the farmers; and now we've got it, without paying a cent for it. I think you children

can afford to give up your sports and stay in the house one afternoon, for the sake of such a blessing as this rain. I will try to amuse you, a part of the time. I've got something that I wish to read to you."

"But it's going to clear off, aunt—don't you see that light spot in the sky, over there?" said George, pointing to the west.

"Pooh, that's nothing—it's looked just so all day," said Ralph; "you won't see any fair weather before night, I can promise you that."

"I should think Ralph had seen the clerk of the weather—he appears to know all about it," dryly remarked Ella.

"That is an expression," said her aunt, "that I do not exactly like—'the clerk of the weather.' I must enter my protest against it."

"Why, aunt, what harm is there in it?" inquired Ella.

"I have two objections to it," replied Miss Lee. "In the first place, it is hackneyed; that is, old, and worn-out. If there ever was any wit in it, it vanished long ago. But the other objection is much more serious.

I think the expression savors of irreverence. God controls the weather without assistance ; and to speak of 'the clerk of the weather,' seems very much like applying a jocose name to Him."

Mr. Preston soon came home to dinner. He was wet and chilly, and went down to the kitchen to dry himself. The children and their aunt were in this room, and the conversation related above had just taken place.

"Well," said Mr. Preston, taking a bundle of letters and papers from his pocket, "who do you suppose I've got a letter from to-day, Ella?"

"From mother?" cried Ella, reaching out her hand to receive it; "let me read it first, won't you, father? I can read it quickest."

"You will have to guess again," replied her father.

"It's from Oscar, then, isn't it? O, how glad I shall be to hear from him! Have n't I guessed right his time, father?" said Ella.

Mr. Preston handed the letter to Ella, and the superscription and postmark soon settled her doubts. It was from Oscar, who was now an inmate of the Reform School. It was addressed to his mother, for he did not

know that she was absent from home The following is a copy of the letter :

“ REFORM SCHOOL, Westboro’, July 20, 185--.

“ DEAR MOTHER,—I received your kind letter, two or three weeks after I arrived here, and was very glad to hear from you. It is a great satisfaction to know that I am not forgotten at home. I wish I was more deserving of your love and kindness. When I think how much trouble I have given you, and father, and the children, I feel as if I wanted to hide my face in shame. Perhaps you will be surprised at my writing in this way, but I think you will find that I am *another boy*, when you see me again. I like here better than I expected. I have found good friends, and they have given me good advice, and I mean to follow it if I can. Dear mother, you must not give me up yet. I have been ‘a wild boy, but now I am determined to ‘be somebody.’

“ We are treated well, here, and enjoy ourselves. We celebrated the Fourth of July in grand style. We attend school about four hours a day, and work six hours, and have some time for play, at morning, noon and night. I am studying geography, arithmetic, grammar, reading, spelling, history, astronomy and writing. I work in the shoe department, and have learned to close shoes very well. We have a large play-ground, and I wish you could look in upon us, some time, when we are at our sports. The boys that behave first-rate, are

rewarded by extra privileges. I intend to come in for a share of them, when I have been here long enough to earn a good character. If I behave well, I suppose father could get the Trustees to discharge me, in the course of a year. I think I had better not go to Boston to live at present; I have too many bad acquaintances there I should not like to go to Brookdale, either; but if I could get a good home on a farm, where I could go to school in winter, I should be very glad.

"Dear mother, I want you and father to write to me, often. And why can't you come and see me, too? I wish you would. Give my love to my brothers and sisters. I am much obliged to Ella for the piece of poetry she sent me. I learned it by heart, and often repeat it to myself, when I am thinking of home. Have Alfred Walton's folks ever heard of him, since he ran away? I wish he had been sent here—it would have been better for him. Have you heard any thing from cousin Jerry, since I left home? Do write soon, and tell me all the news. Good-by, all.

"Your affectionate son,

OSCAR."

This letter was read, and re-read, with much interest and satisfaction, by all the children, and by their aunt. It was the first letter they had received from Oscar, since he left home, nearly two months previously. Its tone was certainly highly encouraging, and it effectual-

ly dispelled the slight gloom which reigned within doors in consequence of the storm. Mr. Preston seemed in uncommonly good spirits, and spoke quite hopefully of Oscar. Aunt Fanny and the children could talk of nothing else, and even Mary, the domestic, insisted on having the letter read in her hearing. In the afternoon, it was mailed to Mrs. Preston; but before it was sent off, Ella took a copy of it, for the use of the family.

George's fair-weather signs proved to be false. Pat—pat—pat, fell the rain-drops upon the brick pavement, all the afternoon; and drip—drip—drip, came the water from the eaves, without a moment's cessation. All idea of out-door excursions was abandoned, and Aunt Fanny's promise was recalled. In the course of the afternoon, it was redeemed; and the result was a fairy story, illustrated with drawings, which Miss Lee had for some time been preparing, expressly for the entertainment of the children. She read the story aloud and handed around the illustrations, as fast as she came to them. Both the pictures and the story are here printed. They are as follows:



THE HAUNTED CASTLE.

Once upon a time, when fairies, and elves, and such folk, were more numerous in the Emerald Isle than they are now, there lived in the little hamlet of Killrany an old man who went by the name of Barney Pinchpenny. Every body in Killrany knew him, and every body pretended to know something about the wonderful amount of money he had laid up, through a long and industrious life; but wise as they all were, none

if they could tell where his hoarded treasures were deposited, and none of them had ever seen the beautiful yellow guineas in which all believed with a perfect faith. Barney was a sly dog, and knew how to keep his business to himself, in spite of all the prying gossips of Killrany. For five and twenty years he was head-gardener to the old Squire Topercrust, whose family constituted the sole gentry of Killrany; and Mistress Pickupthings had maliciously insinuated that he had managed to feather his own nest most comfortably, during this long period of service. But what did she know about it? Nothing at all. Besides, why should not an honest bird feather his own nest, if he has a chance?

But at length the old squire died, and his head was laid as low in the earth as that of the humblest of his peasantry. His family removed from Killrany, the big house was shut up, the fine garden was suffered to choke itself to death with weeds and brambles, and the fruitful acres were let out to whoever would cultivate them. Barney Pinchpenny's occupation was gone, and a sad loss it was to him, too. He sat down in the solitary little cottage which he occupied,—for wife, children or kindred Barney could not claim,—and began to mope

over the misfortune that had overtaken him. No kind friend looked in, to cheer up his sad spirits; but as he brooded over his troubles, a grim specter thrust its wan and pinched-up face through his only window, saying,

“My name is POVERTY—I will have you, now, you old, worn-out victim of toil!”

Presently, another specter, more gaunt and terrible than the other, appeared at the window, and said, with a ghastly smile,

“I am STARVATION. Barney, we will soon shake hands!”

Soon there silently came another specter, more solemn and dreadful than either of the others, since it was but a skeleton, undisguised even by the thin veil of skin, which partially softened the terrors of the last. It spoke not, but Barney knew its name and its business but too well. It was DEATH.

Poor Barney trembled and groaned. The bitterness of poverty, starvation and death seemed already to have seized upon him. And yet, under the great hearth stone there was a secret trap-door; and under that door, there was a small cellar, which no human being but Barney had ever entered; and in that cellar, into

which the light of the sun had never shone, there was a secret hole in the wall ; and in this little opening, there was a strong box ; and in that box, there were a thousand golden guineas, each one of which was sufficient to keep off the grim specters of Poverty, Starvation and (perhaps) Death, for a month ! But Barney profited not by his thousand yellow bullets. Again and again came his ugly visitors, and harder and harder did they stare at him, but he did not try to drive them off ; and every day, as they returned, they saw by his haggard looks that their victim was gradually yielding to their spell.

But if Barney neglected to avail himself of his golden ammunition, against these grim enemies, he did not for a moment cease to think of it. His guineas were in his thoughts by day and by night. He was tormented by the idea that he was about to be robbed of them. Every body seemed to be thinking about his treasures. Some joked him ; some pumped him ; some congratulated him ; some reproved his penuriousness ; some pleaded for charity ; and even the children called him " old miser Pinchpenny." He could not stand it. One morning, before the break of day, he set off for the

great city, on foot, taking his thousand guineas with him. The object of his journey, was to find a celebrated banker, of whom he had often heard Squire Topcrust speak, and to deposit his precious gold in his great thief-proof vaults. Many a time had the squire advised him to do this, but Barney never could bear to part with his money. Now, however, the fear of his neighbors prevailed, and urged him forward to the banker's.

Slowly and wearily did Barney trudge along the road, all day. With his coarse, old clothes, his little bundle tied up in a faded handkerchief, and his rough walking-stick, he looked like a poor vagabond or beggar, and nobody molested him, or even noticed him. Toward evening, when he began to ask himself where he should spend the night, he discovered the ruins of an ancient stone castle, on a distant hill. He turned his steps thither, and found that it would afford him very comfortable quarters for the night, although it was roofless, and its stately halls had not been tenanted for centuries, save by bats and jackdaws. After exploring its multitude of rooms and passage-ways, to satisfy himself that he was to be its sole human occupant, he drew up to a small window, and leaning upon the broad stone sill,

began to examine the beautiful scene that was spread around him. (See engraving at the head of this story.) The sun had set, leaving a bright train of clouds behind him; and soft, mellow lights and shadows fell upon the hills, or lay across the valleys. The air was vocal with the lively chirp of summer birds and insects, interrupted by the lowing of a herd of cattle in a remote field, and the faint peals of the far-off and unseen village bells.

The shadows of evening were falling fast, and the mists from the river began to obscure the distant hills. Barney yet leaned upon the window-sill, thinking, not of the lovely scene before him, but of his errand to the city, and of the thousand guineas that weighed so heavily on his mind, and of the grim specters that had haunted him so cruelly, since Squire Topcrust's death. But suddenly a strange movement in the grass beneath the window attracted his notice. It appeared to be full of little fairies, who were engaged in a variety of most diverting sports. Some dropped themselves into the cup of a flower, and were concealed from their fellows in their tiny hiding-place. Others hid among the tangled grass, or dodged behind the bushes. Others

still were tugging away at ripe fruits they had found in the field. Three could hardly manage an apple, and two could but move a strawberry. Others, older and



more sedate, were calmly floating through the air, watching the movements of the little sprites, and encouraging their innocent gambols.

After awhile, a little band of the fairies gathered around some fruit that they had collected together, and broke forth into a song, that sounded very much like this :

Come to the strawberry bed
Come!
Come, taste the apple red,
Come!

Sweet and fair,
Ripe and rare,
Come, feast to your heart's content,
On the bounties Love hath sent—
Come!

Thanks for the strawberry sweet,
Thanks!
Thanks for good things to eat,
Thanks!
Juicy and fair,
Luscious and rare,
Thanks for the apple and strawberry too,
Thanks from me, and thanks from you,
Thanks!

By-and-by the old man became tired of watching the fairies, and after partaking of his bread and cheese, he made his bed upon the dusty floor, and composed himself to sleep. But the little elfs did not forsake him, through the long night. They hung around his head, fanning it with dewy and fragrant leaves, as he slept, and guarding him from the insect tribes whose favorite retreat he had invaded. A squad of fairies kept guard around his bundle, and sentinels were even posted over the old shoes and hat he had laid aside for the night.

When Barney awoke in the morning he felt greatly refreshed, and proceeded to make a most extravagant

acknowledgment of his indebtedness to his tiny friends; but the sound of his voice was the signal for their flight, and in an instant the room that had been peopled all night with a thousand sprightly beings, was left with only its solitary occupant.

Having again partaken sparingly of his bread and cheese, Barney resumed his journey. Hour after hour did he toil along the dusty road, with his bundle in one hand, and his stick in the other. Few were the people he met, and fewer still the kind looks that greeted him. All passed on their way, and left the old man to himself. At length, the hot noon hours drew near, and he looked around for a place where he might turn in and rest. He soon found a cool and shady thicket, in a wild ravine, away from the highway. It was beneath the brow of a steep and rocky hill. With difficulty he penetrated the dense and tangled mass of shrubbery and half-grown trees, in search of a spot where he might lie down and sleep, without exposing himself to the risk of being robbed. Such a spot he discovered, in the lonely recesses of the thicket. There were a plenty of leaves, too, to make a bed of, and he began to rake them together with his stick. In one place,

against a rock, they had accumulated to a great depth. Barney thought it a little singular that they should have blown together in such quantities in that particular spot. It almost looked as though nature had prepared a bedroom on purpose for him. Pretty soon, however, as he was poking over the leaves, he noticed a small hole, leading under the rock. He removed more of the leaves, and the hole enlarged. He thought some animal had burrowed there, and he run his stick in, to frighten it out. Nothing came forth, but the stick caught in something that excited his curiosity, and with a little pains he succeeded in drawing out a stout canvas bag. He opened it, and behold, it was filled with gold.

Here was a mystery indeed, and Barney was quite stupified with astonishment, for a few moments. When he came to his senses, he was at a loss to decide whether he had stumbled upon a robber's plunder, or a miser's hoard. And then, what was to be done with the treasure? Ah, that was the most important point in his mind, after all. Perhaps he had better hasten with it to the neighboring village, and notify the public authorities of his adventure, that they might

take steps to solve the mystery. Or perhaps it would be wiser to put the money back in the hole, and say nothing about it. Neither of these plans exactly suited him, and so at length he concluded to make a sort of compromise between them, and to adopt one half of each; that is, to *hasten off* with the money, and to *say nothing* about it.

"I was a fool," he said to himself, "to think of trusting my guineas with the banker. As like as not, I should never see them again. I will hurry back with them as fast as possible; and I will take this bag of money with me, too, for no doubt it belongs to some rich old miser, or some bloody thief, who deserves to lose it. Providence provides for the poor, and it is very plain that this hidden gold was not revealed to me for nothing. It will save a poor old man from starvation."

So saying, Barney Pinchpenny gathered up his staff and his bundle (the latter now including the new-found money), and, forgetting all about his nap, his bread and cheese, and his weary legs, he left the secluded thicket much quicker than he entered it. On he trudged with rapid steps, retracing the ground he had gone over in the forenoon; and just as the sun had descended be-

hind the dark hills, he found himself again in the old castle which had sheltered his head the night before. Weary and faint, he threw himself upon the floor, but was too sore and tired to rest. He arose, and leaned again upon the window-sill. No fairies were visible in the grass; the chirp of bird and insect was hushed; the village bells sounded sadly upon the air; and the clouds were dark and threatening. Then he returned to his hard bed, and again sought repose. At length he fell into a troubled sleep. Terrible dreams haunted him, and frightful specters stalked into his presence. A stalwart figure glided noiselessly into his room, plunged a dagger in his heart, seized the bag of treasure, and his own guineas that he had concealed about his person, and disappeared. The agony awoke him, and behold it was only a vision.

Again he slept. A poor old man drew near, with tottering steps. Raising his shriveled arm, and shaking his thin, white locks, he solemnly called down the most terrible curses upon the sleeper, as the robber of the savings of a long life-time of hard toil and self-denial. He awoke, and this, too, was only a dream.

Again he fell asleep; but soon a furious din outside

the castle awoke him from his slumber. Rushing to a vine-embowered window, he looked out, and what a sight did the clear moonlight reveal! A countless army of fairies—or rather hobgoblins, for rage had transformed them into little demons—was approaching



the castle, armed to the teeth, and breathing dreadful threatenings against the foe they were in pursuit of. The old man gazed at them but a moment, and then hobbling off to

the most obscure room he could find, he lay down in its darkest corner, and covered his face with his sleeves. But soon the patter of fairy feet and the clashing of fairy arms began to echo through the great halls of the castle. Nearer and

nearer the sound approached, but the old man only closed his eyes tighter, and breathed more softly. Shortly, however, the enraged army began to pour by legions into the room to which he had fled.

"Here he is!" they exclaimed; "the hoary reprobate! the heartless thief! What shall be done to the miserable man who robbed the Fairy Treasury of every penny it contained? How shall we reward the wretch who stole the charity fund from which the fairy folk dispense mysterious bounties to the poor and the unfortunate?"

Then the whole throng burst forth into a chorus, of which this is the substance :

Pull his hair!
Tweak his nose!
Hit him square,
You know where,—
Where the fighter plants his blows!
Cuff his ears!
Squeeze his toes!
Rap his knuckles till they ache!
Wake his fears.
Start his tears,
And with terror make him quake!
Punch his eyes
Till he cries
Like a victim of despair,
"It is more than I can bear!"

Pluck his beard
Hair by hair!
Pinch his body here and there!
Ope his veins with lancet weird
Plunge it in
'Neath the skin,
Till he groans,
And bemoans
That from virtue's course he veered
Crack his bones!
Twitch his joints!
Fill his mouth with gravel-stones,
And his flesh with needles' points!
Stretch his fingers wide apart!
Tie his hands with elfish art!
Roll him o'er
The hard floor!
Pity not his age or grief!
Grant no favor or relief,
As he wanders through the land;
But upon him rest a curse,
Changeless as a dreadful vow!
On his hand,
On his brow,
Stamp this brand:
"Thief! thief! thief!"
Robber of the fairy band!
Spoiler of the needy's purse!
Prince of rogues, of knaves the chief!
Thief! thief! thief!"

All this while, the old man was feigning sleep, though terrified almost to death. At length, however, the assaults of the hobgoblins became so bold and annoying

that he could endure them no longer. He aroused himself, but to his terror he found that he was bound hand and foot, by silken ropes, made of the tough fibers of certain plants. In vain he tried to break away from them. His tormentors only mocked at his struggles and plied their mischievous arts more diligently. When, after many efforts, his feeble limbs burst their fetters, he discovered that his bundle had been rifled, and that he had lost every thing of value, save a score of guineas



that he had sewed into his clothing. On looking from the window, he saw the purse upon the ground, and the fairies

engaged in carrying off the coins, one by one. The guilty man did not dare to interfere with their operations, and in a short time, the last piece of money disappeared, and suddenly the fairies vanished from his presence.

When the first streaks of light appeared in the east, Barney noiselessly stole away from the old haunted castle, and set his face toward his home. The gossips of Killrany were more busy than ever, when the old man suddenly reappeared, after his mysterious and much talked of absence; but nobody ever ascertained the object of his journey, or heard of the disasters that befell him on the way.

So ends the story of the haunted castle, and this is the lesson which it teaches:—Our peace and happiness depend upon ourselves more than upon others. The same air around us that is peopled with joyous and sportive creatures, who administer to our happiness, when we are innocent, is full of angry and accusing spirits, when we do wrong. The fairy-folk of real life, are those bright and joyous thoughts and feelings that spring from a peaceful conscience and a pure heart; but guilt ever brings with it a train of hobgoblins, that prey upon the mind, and rob it of its dearest treasures.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE SILVER MEDAL.

THE rainy day spoken of in the preceding chapter, was followed by a clear, bright evening. Just as the twilight was fading away in the west, a coach drove up to Mr. Preston's house.

"I wonder who has come, now," said Aunt Fanny, as the driver descended from his seat.

"O, it's mother, I hope!" exclaimed Ella, her eyes sparkling with anticipation.

By this time, the coach-door was opened, and a gentleman and a girl of about Ella's size alighted, and rang the door-bell. They were speedily admitted, and proved to be Mr. John Preston, of Brookdale, and his oldest daughter Emily—the uncle and cousin of Ella. They had been traveling ever since daylight, and were weary and hungry. They started with fair weather, and Mr

Preston said he had often noticed that north-east storms commenced in Boston several hours before they reached Brookdale. But they were not much exposed to the rain, and the good supper provided by Mary, refreshed them very much.

Ella's uncle was in the habit of coming to Boston two or three times a year, on business; but none of the children had ever seen Emily before, as this was her first visit. They knew, however, that she was coming to see them, during the summer, and Ella, in particular, anticipated much pleasure from her visit, as her cousin was nearly of her own age. Mr. Preston had two other children,—Jeremiah, a boy of fourteen, and Harriet, who was about ten years old. Jeremiah, or Jerry, as he was always called, was at sea. He ran away from home the winter previous, and coming to Boston, shipped for a long voyage around Cape Horn to Valparaiso. His father, at that time, was absent in the forests of Maine, where he usually spent the winters, for he was engaged in the logging business. It was a long time before the family could ascertain what had become of Jerry; but at length they received a letter from him, informing them that he was on board the brig Susan, bound as

aforesaid. Mr. Preston's youngest child,—a fine little girl, named Mary,—had died since Jerry's departure from home.

Ella's brother, Oscar, had spent several months in Brookdale, the year before this, and had exerted a very unhappy influence upon Jerry, with whom he associated on the most intimate terms.* Jerry's flight from home was indirectly owing to this bad influence. Oscar, it will be remembered, inquired concerning his runaway cousin, in his recent letter from the Reform School. The children were very glad to learn that their uncle had heard from him, but a few days before. His vessel had arrived at Valparaiso, after a rough passage, in the course of which they once or twice narrowly escaped shipwreck.

"He did not write many particulars," added his father; "but he said he had wished himself home again, ever since he set foot on board the vessel."

"When do you expect him back?" inquired Ella.

"I shall begin to look for him in October," replied Mr. Preston.

* An account of which will be found in the second volume of this series, entitled "Clinton."

"I hope he will come and see us, before he goes back to Brookdale," said Ella.

"I mean to read all the arrivals of vessels printed in the newspapers, after September," said Ralph; "and when the brig Susan gets in, I shall go down to the wharf and hunt up Jerry, before he leaves the vessel."

"That will be a good way to find him," added Mr. Preston; "only you must n't detain him long, for we want him to come right home, as soon as he is discharged."

Ella's father now came in, and warmly greeted his brother and his niece. While the men were talking over their affairs, the children tried to get on sociable terms with Emily, who sat demurely in one corner of the room, speaking only when a question was put to her. Her bashfulness did not very readily give way before their assault, and they found it was no easy task to draw her into conversation. Aunt Fanny soon proposed that the young folks should retire for the night, as it was getting late. Her suggestion was adopted, and the children withdrew to their bedrooms, Emily sharing the chamber with Ella.

Emily's tongue was loosed a little, when she found

herself alone with Ella ; but she was not very talkative, even now. Ella, to tell the truth, felt somewhat disappointed with her country cousin. She did not look any thing as she supposed she did. She was very plain in her features, her skin was not so fair as Ella's, and she was dressed without much regard to city style ; and then she was so shy, and so awkward in her movements, that it was evident she had never been into what genteel people call "good society." Ella noted these shortcomings with regret, mingled, possibly, with the least bit of self-complacency at her own superiority over her cousin, in manners and personal appearance.

The next day was the Sabbath. After breakfast, the family and their visitors prepared to attend church. Ella was more disconcerted than ever, when she saw her cousin in full dress. I do not know enough about costumes to describe the articles she wore ; but if the reader will take my word for it, she was neatly though plainly dressed. To the fastidious eye of Ella, however, strange incongruities appeared. The material of Emily's dress was designed for spring and fall wear, and was quite out of character on such a warm summer day as that. Besides, it looked as if it was cut for an old woman, in-

stead of a young girl. The bonnet, too, was of an outlandish style, the shoes were too thick, the gloves too large, and in fact, every thing was wrong, according to Ella's notions. She really felt ashamed to be seen walking with her cousin, in such a costume. But, to her credit, she quickly suppressed this foolish feeling; for she was too well instructed not to know that she was harboring vain and wicked thoughts. After a momentary struggle with conscience, she determined to think no more of Emily's dress, or of the remarks it might call forth from her acquaintances. Her better nature conquered, and she kept her resolution, walking to and from church with her cousin, and treating her with as much attention as though she were arrayed in the most fashionable attire.

The next day, Ella was not able to spend much time with her cousin, as she was busily engaged in preparing for the school exhibition that was to take place the day following. This was an event that happened but once a year, and it was quite an epoch in her life. She was this year to take an important part in the exercises, and indulged some expectations—no very strong ones, it is true—of receiving a medal.

Tuesday came, and it was a bright and beautiful day. Ella, charmingly dressed in white, left for school at an early hour, and was followed, later in the forenoon, by her aunt and cousin, who had promised to attend the exhibition. The various exercises of the school passed off very successfully, and the large audience assembled were much gratified. Lessons were recited, dialogues and pieces spoken, songs sung, drawings, maps, and specimens of writing exhibited, problems were worked out upon the black-board, compositions were read, addresses were made to the children, by one or two of the visitors, and medals and diplomas were awarded to the most deserving scholars. Ella acquitted herself with credit, both in the recitations, and in an amusing dialogue in which she took a leading part; and when the prizes were distributed, her name was called out, and a silver medal was suspended around her neck, by one of the examining committee. It was a proud moment for her. Dreading disappointment, she had hardly allowed herself to think she should be so happy as to win this coveted distinction; and the prize was more sweet because unexpected.

The value of Ella's medal, in money, was about two

dollars. On one side it bore her name, neatly engraved, on a plain surface. On the opposite side, was a view of Boston, around which were the words, "City Medal—1821," the date referring to the year when these medals were instituted. Although the medals were not awarded until exhibition day, it was determined a week or two previous who should receive them, and the names of the fortunate ones were engraved before the decision was made public.

But the great feature of exhibition day was yet to come off. This was the festival of medal scholars, held every year in Faneuil Hall. Ella, by virtue of her medal, was one of the city's favorite guests, and hastened to the venerable "cradle of liberty," at the appointed hour in the afternoon. She found the spacious galleries filled with boys and girls, dressed in their best attire, and each wearing a medal suspended from the neck. The floor below was occupied by the city officers, teachers, and invited guests; and upon a raised platform, at one end of the hall, were seated the Mayor and several other gentlemen. Long tables, decorated with flowers, and loaded with the most tempting articles of food, were spread, both in the galleries, and upon the broad floor

below. The scene, as viewed from the galleries, was beautiful and inspiring in the highest degree. The decorated hall, the bright array of happy children, the brilliant assembly of ladies and gentlemen, and the elegantly arranged tables, made altogether a picture never to be effaced from the minds of the youth who participated in it.

A blessing was asked by a venerable clergyman, and then the feast commenced. There was a brisk attack upon the cakes, pies, tarts, ice-creams, strawberries, blanc-mange, oranges, lemonade, and other good things with which the tables were burdened. Colored servants in white jackets were flying about, replenishing the emptied dishes, and waiting upon the company. At first, there was some scrambling around the tables; but the order was passed along, "Help yourself, and fall back," and in due time all were served.

After the collation, speeches were made by several gentlemen, and some fine music was performed by a band. The festival closed with the presentation of a bouquet by the Mayor to each of the medal scholars. The children marched down from the galleries, in single file and crossed the speakers' platform; and as they

passed by the Mayor, the gift was put into their hands, with a smile and a kind word for each, and then they returned to their places.

Thus closed the public performances of the memorable exhibition day. Less exciting, but not less sweet than their afternoon festival, were the warm congratulations that awaited the happy children in their homes. The events of the day had given Ella an importance in her own eyes, altogether beyond what she had been accustomed to claim for herself. She felt that she was the hero of the household—"the observed of all observers." But she tried to bear her honors meekly, although, to tell the truth, it was no easy task to do so. There was but one drawback to her happiness—the recollection of her disappointed classmates, who had failed in their competition for the medals. Some of these classmates, it seemed to her, were as deserving as herself, and she could not tell why she was honored, and they rejected. But Ella had really made marked improvement, during the latter part of the term, both in her studies and in her conduct; and to this she owed her medal.

Among the first to congratulate Ella upon her good

fortune, after she returned from the festival, was Whistler, who was spending the afternoon with Ralph. He had some news to tell her, too ; he was to spend his vacation with his uncle in Brookdale, and was to set out on his journey in two or three days.

"I should think you might go with Uncle John—he's going home next week," said Ella.

"Is he?" inquired Whistler ; "I should like to go with him—father thinks it is almost too far for me to travel alone. Will you ask him if I may go with him?"

Ella assented, but her uncle was not to be found. Later in the afternoon, he made his appearance, and, in reply to Ella's inquiries, said he should be pleased to have Whistler go with him. He soon after went down into the back-yard, where the children were collected, and began to talk with them.

"Is this the boy that is going to Brookdale?" he inquired, glancing at the only strange face in the group.

"Yes, sir," replied Ralph, "this is Willie Davenport."

"And you are a cousin to Clinton Davenport, Ella tells me?" continued Mr. Preston.

"Yes, sir," replied Whistler.

"I've known him ever since he was a baby," added

Mr. Preston, "and a very promising boy he is, too—a very promising boy. You will endorse that, won't you, Emily?"

"Yes, sir," she replied, somewhat timidly.

"You may safely do so," resumed her father; "and by the way, Willie, you look a little like Clinton—I can see a bit of the family likeness in your face. I hope you have got something of Clinton's good traits, too—but I'm a little suspicious of city boys," and he glanced roguishly at Ralph.

"O, uncle, you must n't think all city boys are bad," said Ralph, "for I know some real good ones. I don't believe but that we've got as good boys here as you have in Brookdale."

"I suspect your good boys are not quite so industrious as ours are," said Mr. Preston, who was disposed to banter the boys a little. "There's Clinton, for instance—he is only about as large as your friend Willie, and yet he is about equal to a hired man on his father's farm. What do you think of that?"

"Well, that's because he lives on a farm, where there's plenty of work that a boy can do," said Ralph; "but it is n't so with us—there is n't much that we can

do, if we want to work. Besides, if your boys work harder than we do, I don't believe they study so hard,—so we are even with you.”

“I don't know about that,” replied his uncle. “Country boys may not have the benefit of such good schools as you do, but they may learn as fast, for all that. There's Clinton, that I was speaking of—for all he does so much work, I don't believe there are many boys of his age in Boston who know more than he does. He never had much schooling, but he studies at home, and recites to his mother. I wonder how much your city boys would learn, if they did n't go to school?”

Ralph saw that he was not making much headway against his uncle's bantering, and so he backed out of the contest. Mr. Preston, however, renewed his invitation to Whistler to accompany him to Brookdale, and promised to see that he reached his journey's end in safety.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ECONOMY.

THE long summer vacation had now commenced. Of Ella's associates, there were few who were not going out of town, to spend at least a portion of their holidays in the woods and the fields. But no such prospect opened before Ella. Her mother and sister had not returned from Highburg, and it was uncertain when they would arrive. She was more disappointed than she was willing to allow, for she knew it was useless to repine. Ralph and George also shared in her disappointment, for they had both counted upon a trip to the country, during the vacation, although their parents had been careful not to actually promise them such a gratification.

As Emily was to remain in Boston but a few days, Ella concluded to devote most of her time to her, during

her stay. Accordingly, she made it her business to show her cousin about the city, conducting her to the principal streets, the most attractive shops, and the most prominent public buildings. Emily's shyness had worn off; but not so her greenness, as Ella called it. At almost every step, she discovered something strange and wonderful; and as she had come to Boston expressly to "see the sights," no wonder that she indulged her eyes pretty freely. Ella, who had reconciled herself to her cousin's plain and freckled face, and even to her unfashionable style of dress, found her good-nature and courtesy severely tested, by this habit of staring. At length she ventured to hint to Emily the impropriety of looking so hard at every thing and every body. This she did as gently as possible, and her cousin did not take offense at the rebuke—nor pay much regard to it, either.

Ella thus devoted several days to the task of showing to her cousin the principal objects of interest in the city. This required some self-denial, and once or twice she was obliged to decline engagements that would have afforded her much pleasure, rather than leave Emily alone. She found her reward, however, in the enjoyment her at-

tentions afforded to her cousin, and in the approving voice of her own conscience.

During the middle of the day, when it was too warm to walk about the streets, the girls' favorite resort was Aunt Fanny's chamber, which was a cool and pleasant apartment. Here they frequently sat hour after hour, engaged in conversation, and leisurely plying the needle. Ella had of late taken quite a fancy for plain sewing. Formerly, her needle was confined almost entirely to fancy work; but since she had tried to follow her aunt's rules for making herself useful, a marked improvement had been manifest, in this respect. The ever-accumulating pile of "mending" was frequently lightened by her services, and if there was a handkerchief to be hemmed, or a seam to be stitched, she was pretty sure to find it out, and to offer her services. Emily followed her example, during these mid-day visits to Miss Lee's chamber, and proved herself to be both industrious, and expert with the needle.

One afternoon, as the girls were in Miss Lee's room, they heard the voices of several boys, who were on the sidewalk below. Emily, on looking out, saw that Ralph and George were among them; and taking a horn but-

ton from the work-table, she threw it at one of them, to attract his attention, and then quickly drew her head within the window.

“What was that, Emily, that you threw away?” inquired Miss Lee.

“It was nothing but a button,” replied Emily.

“Nothing but a button,” repeated Miss Lee; “and so you think buttons are of no value?”

“Why, an old, bone button, like that, is n’t worth much, is it?” inquired Emily.

“Not much, but still it is worth something,” replied Aunt Fanny. “It takes labor and machinery to make buttons, and money to buy them, and I think that is reason enough why we should not throw them away. Did you ever go into a button manufactory?”

“No, I never did,” replied Emily.

“If you could see how much ingenuity and labor it takes to make a button,” continued Aunt Fanny, “you would not be likely to throw away even an old one, so long as it was capable of doing service. There is a button factory near where I live, and it is really curious to see how the work is done. They make about two bushels of buttons a day, of the kind used for pantaloons.

The material they use, are the refuse scraps of horn and bone that come from the comb-makers. Sometimes, when they can not obtain these, they use the rough horn, which is not so good, as it requires some labor to get it into a fit state to manufacture buttons. After the workman has selected his pieces, he puts them into a large vat, and steams them, until they are very much softened. Then they are taken to a lathe, and turned until they are round and smooth. This is done either by women or by boys, for it is easy work. The lathes go by water-power, and the buttons are turned out very fast. The next thing is to drill the eyes. This is done very rapidly by a curious machine. The four holes in each button are all made at the same time. The buttons are then put into a large wooden box, to be polished. This box is made to revolve by machinery, and about six pecks of buttons are put into it at once, and a little oil mixed with them. After revolving about six hours, they become nicely polished, by rubbing together. They are then dyed in a preparation of logwood, and assorted, the imperfect ones being picked out, and classed as second quality. The most common horn button has to go through all these processes, before it is fit

to use. Do you not think it deserves better treatment than to be thrown out of the window, because it is 'only a button'?"

"I never knew how buttons were made," said Emily "but they don't cost much, do they? That is what I was thinking of."

"No, they do not cost much," added Miss Lee, "but it is a mystery to me how they can be afforded so cheap. The manufacturer sells them for less than a cent a dozen, for all they cost him so much labor. But after all, they cost us *something*, and that is a sufficient reason why they should not be wasted. If we are wasteful in little things, there is danger that we shall by-and-by become extravagant and careless in larger matters. It was not the value of the button that led me to speak of the affair, but the value of the principle involved."

"Well, I'll go and see if I can find that button," said Emily, who thought that Aunt Fanny had taken rather too much notice of a trifle.

"No, child, you need n't do that," said Miss Lee, with a smile.

Emily did not turn back, but went down to the sidewalk and commenced searching for the lost button.

While thus engaged, her father came along, having just returned from a walk. He inquired what she had lost, and, forgetting the open window above her, she replied,

“I dropped an old button out of the window, and Aunt Fanny has said so much about it, that I am trying to find it.”

Miss Lee and Ella heard the remark, which was uttered in a peevish tone, and were not a little surprised thereat. Mr. Preston made some observation which they did not understand, and joined her in the search. Emily soon returned, followed by her father, who, seeing Miss Lee's door was open, entered the room, remarking, by way of excuse for his intrusion, that he believed it was the most comfortable spot in the house.

“I could n't find the button,” said Emily, as she resumed her seat at the window-side.

“It is of no consequence—I did n't wish you to hunt for it,” replied Miss Lee. “I have been trying to give your daughter a lesson on economy,” she added, turning to Mr. Preston, “but she does n't seem to be exactly pleased with it.”

“Perhaps our ideas on that subject do not agree,” said Mr. Preston. “Economy is an excellent virtue.

but I hold that there is such a thing as preaching it up too much to the young. I would rather have a child of mine become as extravagant as the prodigal son, than see him a mean, miserly dog, never spending a dollar that was not absolutely wrung out of him by force. For that reason, I think it is best not to say much to children about saving up money, and practicing economy."

"I fully agree with you, in your hatred of meanness," replied Miss Lee; "but I think we can teach children economical habits, without any danger of making them misers. There is a great difference between economy and parsimony, and I think we can secure the one, and steer clear of the other. Ella has half a dollar, which I have advised her to put in the 'Five Cents Savings Bank;' but if I thought it would make her stingy, to do so, I would rather see her throw the money into the sea."

"I would not allow a child of mine to put his money into one of those concerns," said Mr. Preston.

"Why not?" inquired Miss Lee.

"Because it encourages a hoarding spirit," replied Mr. Preston; "and I should like to have you prove that that is not the effect."

"I shall not dispute that point with you," resumed Miss Lee; "I know it encourages a hoarding spirit, and that is just what we want to do. Man is naturally a hoarding animal, just as the squirrel is, and God meant that it should be so. In harvest time, we must hoard for winter and spring; in health, we must hoard for sickness; in the prime of life, we must hoard for old age. Hoarding is nothing but saving, as I understand it, and it is a virtue, so long as we keep it within reasonable bounds."

"Your definition of the word is a little different from my idea of its meaning," said Mr. Preston; "I think it implies a miserly spirit, as it is generally used."

Ella was dispatched for the great dictionary, in the sitting-room, and soon returned, and read from Webster the following definition of the verb, to hoard:—"To collect and lay up a large quantity of any thing; to amass and deposit in secret; to store secretly; as, to hoard grain or provisions; to hoard silver and gold."

"You are right," said Mr. Preston; "but you see the word implies *secrecy*—how do you get over that?"

"Well," replied Miss Lee, "if we hoard any thing for

our future wants, it would be neither modest nor prudent to parade it very prominently before the world, would it?"

A smile was Mr. Preston's only reply. Aunt Fanny now requested Ella to turn to the word economy, and read the definition aloud. She complied, and read the following:—"A frugal and judicious use of money; that management which expends money to advantage, and incurs no waste; frugality in the necessary expenditure of money. It differs from parsimony, which implies an improper saving of expense. Economy includes also a prudent management of all the means by which property is saved or accumulated; a judicious application of time, of labor, and of the instruments of labor."

"That is the kind of economy that I inculcate," said Miss Lee;—"to make a good use of every thing, and to waste nothing that possesses any value." She then related to Mr. Preston the incident that led to this conversation, and repeated what she said to Emily, in regard to a habit of wastefulness.

"But after all," said Mr. Preston, when she had finished, "while you are preaching economy, they may be learning parsimony. They are not old enough to dis-

tinguish between them, and I don't see how you can prevent their mistaking the one for the other."

"There is one sure way to prevent such a mistake," replied Miss Lee, "and that is, to teach them to be liberal to the needy and unfortunate. If they are trained to habits of benevolence, they can learn to be frugal, but they can not learn to be miserly."

The discussion was continued for some time longer, but Mr. Preston failed to support himself against the arguments of Aunt Fanny; and although he would not acknowledge his defeat, his confidence in his own position was very much shaken.

Among the places which Ella and Emily visited, in their next walk about the city, was the "Five Cents Savings Bank." It was a large and pleasant apartment, with nice-looking desks, covered with great folios, that contained the records of the institution. Quite a company were waiting to be attended to, and a curious group it was, too. There was a wide-awake newsboy, pushing himself forward, with the quarter which he was impatient to add to his bank deposit. Here is a little fellow who proudly holds out a silver dollar to the treasurer—a dollar which he has earned by doing errands,

and holding horses, and carrying carpet-bags, from the railroad depots. A little girl, who sells candy, has brought a small coin to deposit; and another little miss, a *very* little one, timidly offers a five cent piece to the treasurer, which is the smallest sum the bank receives. There are also several women awaiting their turn, whose deposits vary in amount from five to one hundred dollars. Ella took her place in the line, and in due time, was relieved of her half dollar, receiving, in lieu thereof, a little pass-book, which contained the printed regulations of the bank, and a written entry of her deposit.

The sensation of having money at interest, and of controlling "funds in the bank," is quite a notable thing, when one experiences it for the first time. At least, so Ella found it. She felt as if she stood higher in the world than ever before, by at least an inch. The event, however, was the occasion of many jokes among the children in which Ella joined as heartily as the others.

CHAPTER XIX.

LITTLE THINGS.

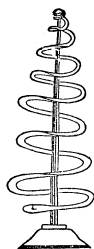
THE next day was Saturday. At an early hour, Emily and her father started for a neighboring town, where they had arranged to spend the Sabbath. They expected to return Monday morning, and to start for their home in the afternoon of that day. Ella's task, as *cicerone* or guide to her cousin, was thus brought to a termination, and her time was now at her own command. Her first care, however, was to attend to her morning work, which, at her aunt's suggestion, she had somewhat slighted for several days previous, for Emily's sake. Having finished this, she thought she would sit down a little while, and amuse herself with a box of paints which her aunt had recently presented to her. Miss Lee had already given her one or two lessons in water-color painting, and Ella had evinced some taste for the art. But, strange enough, the paint-box was no

where to be found, this morning. She knew the exact spot where she left it, in a corner of the bureau-drawer ; but it was not there. She searched the room, but could not find it. A similar examination of the boys' chamber, was quite as unsatisfactory. She then extended her search through the house, growing more impatient every moment, but could obtain no clew to the missing box.

Ella had given up the search, when, happening to pass into the wood-shed, she found her lost box lying bottom upward on the ground, and its contents scattered among the dirt. She carefully gathered up the brushes and cakes of paint, and found that nothing was lost. No, I am wrong ; she had sustained one loss—the loss of her temper ; and she took no pains to conceal this fact from her aunt, as she reported the circumstances to her.

Soon after this, Ralph called to Ella to come down into the kitchen, as he had something he wished to show her. On entering the room, she saw something that looked like a snake, winding itself around a rod, over the fire, to the great astonishment of Mary, and to the no small amusement of the boys. It was called a smoke-

snake, and was a specimen of Ralph's ingenuity. He

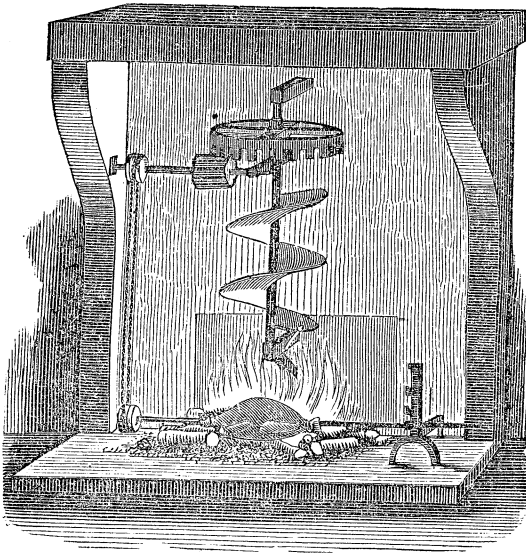


made it in the following manner. Having procured a piece of stiff card-paper, five or six inches square, he cut it out spirally, so as to resemble a snake, as seen in the first figure in the engraving. He then painted it, to resemble the creature he wished to imitate. Next, he drew the two ends apart, forming a spiral, which he mounted upon a slender rod and stand, attaching the snake to the rod by a needle. On placing

this contrivance over the range, the heat made it revolve rapidly, and its resemblance to a serpent was very close. If he had placed it in a current of smoke, or suspended it by a thread over a lamp, the effect would have been the same.

This ingenious toy has been turned to a useful purpose, in some parts of the world. The smoke-snake has been harnessed into the service of the kitchen, and it must be confessed that it makes a very good turn-spit. A turn-spit, you must know, is a sort of assistant cook, whose business it is to see that the savory joint or fowl is kept continually "going round doing good." How

the smoke-snake manages to do this, the engraving sufficiently explains.



Ella did not contemplate Ralph's toy with quite so much satisfaction as she might have felt under other circumstances. She saw at a glance that the mystery of the paint-box was explained, and she lost no time in calling the supposed offender to account. It appeared, however, that most of the blame belonged to George.

Ralph told him to ask Ella for the paints, but he considered that an unnecessary trouble, and so helped himself to the box; and he neglected to return it, afterward, though requested by his brother to do so. Leaving the box upon the wood-pile, it got jarred down, and hence the plight in which Ella found it.

After amusing himself awhile with the smoke-snake, Ralph gave it to Ella. George was not very well pleased with this disposition of the toy.

"I should have thought Ralph might have given it to me," he said; "he knew I wanted it, for I asked him for it."

"Perhaps that is the reason you did n't get it," suggested Ella, with an arch look; "I should very often give you things, if you did n't tease so hard for them."

"I did n't tease him for it," replied George, in rather an ungentle tone.

"Well, if you want this thing, you shall have it," said Ella, handing him the smoke-snake; "I will give it to you, to pay you for taking such good care of my box of paints."

George felt the rebuke, and was ashamed of himself. Ella, on the other hand, enjoyed the satisfaction of

knowing that she had returned good for evil, and conquered an adversary by kindness. Aunt Fanny was present, during this conversation, but was busily at work, and did not appear to notice what was going on. After George had left the room, she said,

"Well, Ella, I thought a little while ago that I should have to talk with you again pretty plainly about controlling your temper; but now, I really think you deserve some credit, for the forgiving spirit you have displayed. You have punished George nobly, and I think he will remember it, too."

"It was real provoking to have him serve my paint-box as he did," said Ella, modestly evading the compliment, "but I suppose it was foolish to get into a passion about such a little thing."

"Little things," replied her aunt, "need to be looked after quite as sharply as great ones. It seems strange, but I do believe it is harder to bear little troubles and vexations with patience, than it is to submit to great evils. We can summon all the powers of our minds, and brace ourselves against a great provocation; but the petty annoyances of every-day life are sure to chafe and fret us, if we are not very watchful."

"I have noticed that very often, especially since I tried to keep my resolutions," said Ella; "but I did n't know it was so with every one."

"Yes, we are all alike in that respect," replied her aunt; "and this peculiarity of our minds, shows you where your greatest danger lies. Your resolutions are now so well established in your mind, that if they are ever broken down, they will probably be undermined by little, trifling vexations. If you will always be on your guard against little annoyances, little temptations, and little faults, you will have nothing to fear. These are the small wedges that work themselves into the little cracks and crevices of our characters, until they become powerful enough to cleave the whole fabric asunder. Or they may be compared to little thieves, that steal into the house through the smallest holes, and then throw open the doors to let in greater robbers."

"Then you think I have kept my resolutions pretty well, so far, do you, aunt?" inquired Ella.

"Yes, I think there has been quite an improvement in your conduct, since I came here, and I hope it will be permanent," replied her aunt.

"I suppose I must give all the credit to my resolu-

tions," said Ella ; " but I don't see why merely writing them on paper, instead of forming them in my mind, should make such a difference. I made just such resolutions a good many times before, but I never kept them long."

"The mere *writing out* of purposes of amendment is not very material," replied Aunt Fanny, "if they are only properly formed in the mind. The main points are, to know just what are our faults, to resolve firmly to correct them, and to hold fast to that resolution, seeking help from above. Still, I think there are advantages in putting our resolutions and rules of conduct upon paper. It impresses them more sensibly on the mind, and embodies our good purposes in a tangible, definite shape. In this way it gives more weight and authority to our resolutions than they would otherwise possess, and assists us in keeping them in mind. Many excellent Christians have found great benefit in writing and signing solemn covenants and resolutions. The practice was once quite common, in England and America. A similar custom has often been followed by eminent scholars, philosophers, moralists, statesmen, etc. Washington and Franklin, I believe, both tried to govern

their conduct by written rules ; and so of many others, whose names I can not at this moment recall. But after all, the purpose must exist in the mind, as well as on paper, or it will be of no value."

The next time Ella encountered George, he appeared much concerned about the paint-box, and was anxious to know whether it had sustained any damage, or whether any of the cakes of colors had been lost or broken. He then, in an awkward way, half apologized for and half justified what he had done. He could not find Ella, he said, and so took it without her leave ; and he certainly meant to carry it back, but forgot it. It was easy to see that he felt sorry for the mishap, although he did not confess so much as this. Ella was encouraged by this little incident. She knew that no amount of scolding and fretting would have produced this effect upon George, for she had tried the experiment too often, to be in doubt on that point. She felt like one who had made an agreeable discovery. She had at last found the way to George's feelings, through the crust of selfishness that enveloped them.

Although George was a very selfish boy, it is due to him to say that there were circumstances in his history

which partially excused, or at least palliated, the fault. When two or three years old, he had a long and severe sickness; and to insure his recovery, it was found necessary to humor him very much, as the excitement of fretting, crying and screaming were injurious to him. 't was thus that he got into the habit of having his own way, and of thinking that every body's will must bend to his own. But he was now old enough to conquer this great fault, and his excuse was fast losing whatever virtue it once possessed. Indeed, his selfishness had worn off somewhat, within a year or two; but the remaining stock was sufficient to make him a very unpleasant play-fellow among the children, and a serious trial to his parents. His parents and his aunt had often talked with him about this ugly habit, but without any remarkable effect. One day, when his aunt was speaking to him on the subject, he put in the plea that he was not so selfish as formerly, and cited Ralph as his authority.

"If you have made any improvement, I am very glad of it," replied his aunt; "but I hope you will not make that an excuse for not curing yourself entirely of the fault. You remind me of a story I have heard about

the gunpowder plot. I don't know whether it is true or not, but it is said that when an officer was sent to examine the vault under the Parliament House, he reported on his return that he had found twenty-five barrels of gunpowder, and had removed ten of them, and hoped the other fifteen would do no harm. So you seem to think that if you lop off a little of your bad habit, the rest is of no consequence. But that is not the way. You must make thorough work with your enemy, or it will make thorough work with you."

Aunt Fanny was gratified to hear of George's concern about the paint-box, which, she thought, betokened that her own faithful reproofs, coupled with the improved example of Ella, and the influence of the rest of the family, might yet make a better boy of him.

CHAPTER XX.

THE SURPRISE.

ELLA'S uncle and cousin returned from their excursion into the country, on Monday, and set about preparing for their homeward journey. They had concluded to make the trip by steamboat, which would land them within about forty miles of Brookdale. The rest of the journey would have to be performed by stage-coach. The steamboat was to sail at a late hour in the afternoon, and they would be on the water all night; but the weather was so pleasant and calm, that they chose this in preference to the land or railroad route.

Aunt Fanny seemed unusually busy, and several times, during the forenoon, Ella noticed certain movements that awakened her curiosity. She came to the conclusion that something was going on that she knew nothing about, but what it was, she could not guess.

She kept her eyes and ears on the alert, but they brought no report back that could help her solve the mystery.

During the forenoon, Frank, Mr. Preston's store-boy, called at the door, and left a letter for Miss Lee, which his master had just received through the post-office. It proved to be from Mrs. Preston, and the children eagerly flocked around their aunt, to hear it read. It was a short letter, and contained only one item of news of sufficient interest to be noticed here. That was, a plan that Mrs. Preston and her relatives at Highburg had formed in regard to Oscar. In case he could be taken away from the place where he was confined, Mrs. Page and her son Marcus had agreed to receive him into their home, and to do all that they could do to make a good boy of him. They had become particularly interested in his behalf, from reading his letter to his mother, which had been forwarded to her at Highburg. Mrs. Preston concluded by expressing an earnest wish that the plan could be carried out.

The suggestion seemed to meet with general favor. The children, especially Ella and Ralph, were delighted with it. Their aunt, who had been considering a simi-

lar project for several days, was rejoiced to find that her sister, whose home she shared, had arrived at the same conclusion with herself. Their Uncle John, too, heartily approved of the plan; and when their father came home to dinner, he informed them that he also had received a letter from their mother in regard to the project, and was very favorably impressed with it. Oscar had never been to Highburg; and the particulars of his career were not known to any one there, with the exception of his Aunt Page and Marcus. Even Ronald had not been apprised of them. This would be in his favor, if he wished to start anew in life. But the chief argument in favor of the plan, was the salutary influence he would be under. Subject to the kind watch and care of such friends as Mrs. Page, Miss Lee, (who expected soon to return to her Vermont home,) and Marcus, "the boy-tamer," it seemed impossible that he could help reforming, especially with his present penitent feelings.

So they all reasoned, and gave a unanimous approval to the plan. In fact, they considered the matter as already settled, until Mr. Preston disturbed their pleasant dream, by reminding them that they had got to procure

his discharge from the Reform School, before they could send him to Highburg. The probabilities of succeeding in this effort were anxiously discussed. Mr. Preston thought it rather uncertain whether they could procure his immediate release, as he had been in the institution but two months ; but if Oscar behaved well, he believed they should eventually be able to carry out their plan. He promised to apply for his discharge, at once ; and said he should write to Oscar, that afternoon, and inform him what they were doing in his behalf.

Oscar and the new project continued to form the topic of conversation, during the noon meal, and Mr. Preston was so absorbed in the matter, that he quite forgot some other things, that he had a particular interest in remembering, just at that time. Urging Ella to take another piece of meat, he said,

“ Yes, you had better—you will need something to stand by you, when—” he here checked himself, and the roguish smile on the countenance of Miss Lee threw him into a hearty laugh, in which all the others joined.

“ I should like to know what the matter is,” said Ella ; “ you are all laughing at me, to-day, and I can’t find out what it’s for.”

This was followed by a new outburst of laughter, which only went to confirm Ella's suspicions. When it had subsided, her father said,

"I was laughing at a story I have often heard old Major Snow tell, about revolutionary times. During the siege of Boston, General Gage used to grant permits for females only to leave the town. A young fellow thought he could outwit the sentinel, and so he dressed himself in woman's clothing, and tried to pass the lines. But the soldier stopped the pretended woman, and said he did n't believe she had got a permit; whereupon *she* replied, 'Yes, I have—I've got it *in my pantaloons pocket!*'"

"I don't see what made you think of that story," said Ella. "I believe you are trying to hide something from me, or are going to play some trick upon me. Is n't it so, Aunt Fanny?"

Her aunt smiled, and looked wise, but made no reply. Ella glanced from one face to another, but without obtaining any light upon the mystery. Having baffled her curiosity a while longer, her father at length inquired,

"Did n't you know that you are going down to

Brookdale this evening, with your uncle and Emily, to stay a month?"

Ella looked incredulous a moment, and then replied, "Do you mean so, father, or are you only making cool of me?"

"Yes, I'm in earnest, and your trunk is packed for the journey," said Mr. Preston, rising from the table. "I may not see you again, before you start, and I want you to take good care of yourself, and behave as well as you know how; will you do so?"

Ella promised to comply with his request, and also to write weekly, during her absence; and her father, after giving her a few further directions, and a parting kiss, left for his place of business.

Ella was not the only one who was surprised by her father's announcement. Ralph and George knew nothing about the matter, until that moment. The latter manifested his feeling, by crying for half an hour because he could not go, too; but Ella finally laughed him out of it, by rallying him about making such a fuss because she was going to leave him for a few weeks.

Ella was busily employed all the afternoon in preparing for the journey. Her aunt, who had previously

got her clothing in readiness, now gave her further assistance; and while doing so, she answered Ella's numerous inquiries in regard to the affair. She told her that it had been determined on three or four days previous, and that her father took a fancy that he would have it kept secret until the day came, and so take her by surprise. She moreover told Ella that she must consider her visit to Brookdale a reward for her good conduct, during her mother's absence. Her father was so well pleased with her behavior at home, and her success at school, that he had arranged this journey for her gratification. This announcement, as you may well suppose, was very grateful to her feelings.

Whistler, who was going to Brookdale in the same party with Ella, called around, in the afternoon, to bid the children good-by. He was as much surprised as delighted to find that he was to have Ella's company, throughout the vacation. They were both going to a place they had never visited, and where they had no intimate acquaintances; and it was pleasant to know that they would be able to see each other daily, if they chose.

The hack drove up to the door, at the appointed time. The trunks were strapped upon the rack, and the

three passengers took their seats. Miss Lee and Mary were the only ones at home to exchange farewells with them, and to watch the coach, as it drove away. On reaching the wharf, however, they found Mr. Preston and the boys, waiting for them. Whistler was there, too, he having walked to the boat with Ralph and George, who helped him carry his valise. They had a little time to examine the boat, and to watch the busy movements going on around them; and then the order was given to cast off, good-bys were hastily uttered, friends and visitors hurried ashore, the plank was drawn upon the deck, the wheels slowly churned the water into froth, and the steamer began to move. Ella kept her eye upon her father and brothers, as the wharf seemingly receded from view; and long after she was unable to distinguish their countenances, she could see the boys waving their caps, and acknowledged the signal with her handkerchief.

The little group loitered upon the wharf, enjoying the cool breeze and the animating spectacle, until no trace was to be seen of the gallant steamer, but the black train of smoke she had left behind her. They then turned their steps homeward, with a new sense of lonesome-

ness weighing upon their spirits ; but sweet and kindly thoughts were welling up in their hearts, and flowing forth through invisible channels, after the loved ones abroad.

The experiences and adventures of Ella and Whistler, during their absence from home, may perhaps be hereafter chronicled, in another volume.

24 *

THE END.

"WE HARDLY THINK A BETTER SERIES OF BOOKS FOR CHILDREN WERE EVER
WRITTEN."— *Youth's Companion*.

The Aimwell Stories.

A new Volume now ready.

JESSIE; Or, TRYING TO BE SOMEBODY.

BY WALTER AIMWELL.

With 40 Illustrations. 16mo. Cloth. 63 Cents.

SOME OF THE SUBJECTS INTRODUCED IN JESSIE:—

Knowledge brings Promotion.	Patience and Perseverance.
Getting paid for "The Know How."	Neatness.
True Motive for Study.	Rights of Partners.
Observance of the Sabbath.	Snow-houses.
Home Sickness.	Ice-boats.
How to be loved and happy.	A Drunkard's Career.
Making and saving Money.	Boasting.
Learning to be Misers.	The virtuous Woman.
A Lesson on Prayer.	Being dunned.
Scandal.	Modesty and its Reward.
Running in Debt.	Pride and its Fall.
Making Maple Sugar.	Making Sacrifices for Principle.
Spelling Matches.	Settling a Quarrel by Referees.
Novel Reading.	Egyptian Pyramids.
April Fooling.	The Grade of Honor.
The Memory.	The Grade of Fidelity.
Two Ways of Studying.	Concentration of Mind.
The Wind.	Squinting.
A Surprise Party.	Easter Eggs.
Casting Burdens on the Lord.	Eating Pickles, Vinegar, &c.
Influence.	Meanness.
Dress and Finery.	Falsehood.
Beating down the Price.	A grand Snow-slide.
Keeping Accounts.	How to make an American Flag.
Three Ways of keeping a Diary.	Adorning the Graves of the Departed.
Step by Step.	Notes of Hand, &c., &c.

ALSO, THE FOLLOWING GAMES, SPORTS, &c.

Peter Coddle's Trip to New York, (three games in one.)	The domestic Newspaper.
The Moslem Oracle.	Pith Tumbler.
A juvenile Court.	The poetical Top.
Arithmetical Puzzles.	Caging the Birds.
The balanced Coin.	Task Verses.
Gallery of literary Portraits.	Thread-paper Poetry.
Parlor celebration of Washington's Birth- day.	Alliterative Poetry.
	Centos Verses.
	&c., &c., &c.

(ee)

The Aimwell Stories.

In Uniform Style, with Numerous Illustrations. Cloth, 63 Cents.

I.

OSCAR; OR, THE BOY WHO HAD HIS OWN WAY

So graphic and natural are the incidents of this story, that it must have been compiled from a real boy-experience.—*N. Y. Home Journal*.

This is one of the best books for boys we have ever read.—*Boston Transcript*.

It is one of the Aimwell Series, and is from the same pen with 'Clinton,' a book for boys which has had few equals of its kind in any age.—*Norton's Lit. Gaz.*

II.

CLINTON; OR, BOY-LIFE IN THE COUNTRY.

Well, the boys have read it, and pronounce it 'first rate.' We confirm their judgment. It enters into the heart of the boy; comprehends his thoughts, his wishes, and his temptations: mingles in his sports; stimulates him in his studies, and implants right principles, and noble views. It is a safe book, an entertaining book, and a useful book.—*The Independent, N. Y.*

We attempted to read this book, but the boys got hold of it, and morning, noon, and night, they kept hold of it; until one, and another, and another still, had read it through. If their judgment is worth anything, the book is capital,—one of the very best of its kind.—*N. Y. Evangelist*.

'A prime book,' as we heard a little boy say, who had just got through with it.—*Youth's Companion, Boston*.

III.

ELLA; OR, TURNING OVER A NEW LEAF.

Neatly printed, beautifully illustrated, and most interestingly told. Such volumes are a public treasure.—*Boston Post*.

A capital little work, written with a good purpose, and well calculated to enforce the moral lessons of the author.—*Ballou's Pictorial*.

One of the best written, most instructive and entertaining little stories that has fallen in our way for some time.—*Boston Traveller*.

IV.

WHISTLER; OR, THE MANLY BOY.

It is the best juvenile book we have ever read.—*Lynn Reporter*.

It is a book that we can cordially recommend to a place in every boy's library.—*Boston Journal*.

Described as equal to its predecessors: or, in boy language, as 'first rate, I tell you!' 'Good, you'd better believe!' Books like these are worth double the money one pays for them.—*Worcester Palladium*.

V.

MARCUS; OR, THE BOY-TAMER.

Interesting anecdotes, wholesome precepts and noble examples abound throughout the volume, which is one of the best, and belongs to one of the best series of books for the young, which we have ever seen.—*Congregationalist*.

This book is full of wise suggestions and valuable information. It will repay many perusals, and is altogether such a book as youth ought to have.—*Zion's Herald*.

VI.

JESSIE; OR, TRYING TO BE SOMEBODY.

(dd)

VALUABLE WORKS FOR THE YOUNG.

YOUNG AMERICANS ABROAD; or, Vacation in Europe : the Results of a Tour through Great Britain, France, Holland, Belgium, Germany, and Switzerland. By JOHN OVERTON CHOULES, D. D., and his PUPILS. With Elegant Illustrations. 16mo, cloth, 75 cts.

A highly entertaining work, embracing more real information, such as every one wishes to know about Europe, than any other book of travels ever published.

Three intelligent lads, who knew how to use their eyes, accompanied their tutor on a European tour; and, from a carefully-kept journal, they wrote out, in a series of letters to a favorite companion in study, at home, their impressions of the most remarkable places *en route*. The pencillings are genuine and unaffected, and in all respects form an interesting and instructive record of travel. — *Sartain's Magazine*.

One of the most instructive and delightful books of the age. — *Southern Lit. Gaz.*

Boys, here is a book that will suit you exactly. It is a series of letters from certain boys travelling in Europe to their classmates in this country. It will improve your knowledge and amuse you during long winter nights. — *Methodist Prot.*

It is worth much more than many a larger and more pretentious volume, for giving a daguerreotype of things abroad. — *Congregationalist*.

A beautiful book for young people, unlike any thing we have ever seen. — *Ch. Ob.*

Most interesting book that can be put into the hands of the young. — *Olive Branch*.

The best book of foreign travel for youth to be found in the whole range of American literature. — *Buffalo Morning Express*.

THE ISLAND HOME; or, the Young Castaways. By CHRISTOPHER ROMAUNT, ESQ. With Elegant Illustrations. 75 cts.

The best and prettiest book for boys that we have lately seen. — *Boston Post*.

A stirring and unique work. It will interest the juvenile immensely. — *Olive Br.*

Delightful narrative of the adventures of six boys who put to sea in an open boat and were drifted to a desert island, where they lived in the manner of Robinson Crusoe. — *N. Y. Com.*

A book of great interest, and one which will be a treat to any boy. — *Horn's Circle*.

The young will pore over its pages with almost enchanted interest. — *Transcript*.

A modern Robinson Crusoe story, without the dreary solitude of that famous hero. It will amuse and instruct the young in no ordinary degree. — *Southern Lit. Gazette*.

A story that bids fair to rival the far-famed Robinson Crusoe. We become as much interested in the Max, Johnny, Arthur, and the rest of the goodly company, as if the Swiss Family Robinson. — *Sartain's Magazine*.

THE AMERICAN STATESMAN; or, Illustrations of the Life and Character of DANIEL WEBSTER, for the Entertainment and Instruction of American Youth. By the REV. JOSEPH BANCROFT, author of "Plymouth and the Pilgrims," "Novelties of the New World," "Romance of American History," etc. With elegant Illustrations. 75c.

A work of great interest, presenting a sketch of the most striking and important events which occurred in the history of the distinguished statesman, Daniel Webster, avoiding entirely all points of a political character; holding up to view, for the admiration and emulation of American youth, only his commendable traits of character. It is just such a work as every American patriot would wish his children to read and reflect upon.

